WINGED MOCCASINS

Abbie Johnston Grosvenor

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WINGED MOCCASINS

THE SWALLOW HAD ALMOST TAMED A WOLF WHELP.

WINGED MOCCASINS

A Tale of the Adventurous Mound-Builders

By ABBIE JOHNSTON GROSVENOR

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Pictures Made Three Thousand Years Ago
Adapted for this book by
Ivan Grosvenor

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To

ELMER BAER GROSVENOR

who showed us the liveliest places on the map

this book

is dedicated by the author and the illustrator

FOREWORD

A BOLD youth stood on one of the far eastern points of Asia and looked out over Bering Sea.

On the horizon he could see a black speck. Among the tossing waves this spot was steadfast. Few had observed it. No one had ever gone there. But it must be land. New land!

He had a stout heart, that explorer. He bundled furs and food, stone spears and axes, a fire-drill and a dog into his canoe. Upon the unknown waters he paddled away and reached an island and then another and still another beyond it.

Men with more furs and food, more stone weapons and tools, with women and children, followed him. Finally he came to Alaska, the first human being to set foot on the New World's shore.

His people wandered about the Western Hemisphere and settled in it centuries before the Viking ships or the Columbus caravels discovered America.

Many of the things these aborigines did in those far off times and other deeds they may, perhaps, have done, are told in these pages.

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WINGED MOCCASINS

I

THUNDER BIRD

WHIMPERING, the puppy got up, turned round and round, and laid itself down again. It began to snarl and to snap. Then it fell to work making a hole in the wall of its kennel.

This puppy was a miserable creature, big and clumsy and cross. But a fellow must have a dog and if he lived three thousand years ago, the only way to get a really lively one was to catch a wolf whelp, imprison it and tame it. Otherwise he must take one of the mongrel curs that hung around his village.

Kidnaping the baby of a slavering green-eyed she-wolf was not an easy task. Bringing it up to be a docile pet was harder yet. Most attempts were failures. Yet every boy had to try it once.

This puppy should have loved its master for he was young and gay, with black, black eyes and red-gold skin. His hair was bobbed. A ribbon of copper wire, brought from far Lake Superior, rested low on his forehead like a crown. A fresh-water pearl, large and perfect, hung from one ear. He

was some sort of small chieftain, a high caste barbarian, son of an old Mound city's ruler who headed the tribe that lived near his fort.

This Small Chieftain wore a loin cloth woven from threads made of cat-tail leaves. Inside his moccasins, his feet were hard and elastic.

A pile of faggots formed his bed. He slept at the foot of the mound in the center of the earthen fort, parts of which still stand near the city of Winchester in eastern Indiana. He was one of the keepers of the fire on the top of the mound and a long distance runner in its service.

His puppy splintered the tightly woven green branches which formed its house and wriggled out. What if the kennel had been made of smooth boards? There were no boards in those days. Or if the puppy had been chained? Scores of the mound building people had stubbed their toes on iron ore in some places and on coal lumps in others, but not one of them had thought of using the coal to smelt the iron. They had no steel for anything, no chains and no tools except those of wood or stone or bone.

By the time the morning star hung like a lantern over the fort, the puppy was free. It put a tail between its legs and sneaked away.

One of the Middle West's heavy March storms was rolling up from the west. The runaway's wolf

nose trembled and grew colder. Its sensitive ears were hurt by the shrill warning notes in the wind. When the sky began to blacken, the puppy hesitated, then doubled on its tracks and slunk back to the kennel again. After all, its master was the only friend it had and it did not want to be alone in the rain.

The Small Chieftain was awakened by a cool nuzzling under his chin. He saw the broken dog house and feeling the quivering nose against him, was overjoyed to think that, although the whelp might have escaped, it had chosen to stay with him. He gathered it into his arms as fondly as though it had been a decent dog. Together they ran up the steps which stone axes had hacked in the clay of the mound.

The mound was fifteen feet high and a hundred feet in diameter at the base. From his post, the Small Chieftain could see beyond the walls of the fort that surrounded him. Those walls were eight feet high. They were over thirteen hundred feet long on the north and on the south sides; more than a thousand feet on the east and on the west. Thirty acres were enclosed in their rectangle. Twenty thousand people could be sheltered there.

There were at that time thousands of towns with some such earthworks along the different streams of the Mississippi valley. Every fertile region was

dotted with them. This fort at Winchester was one of the largest.

Toward it, this morning, folks from outlying villages, driven by fear of the storm as though it had been an armed enemy, came fleeing in groups. They glanced back over their shoulders in dread of the clouds. Those clouds were the black wings of the Thunder Bird, flapping to deafen them. Its eyes flashed lightning at them.

The country was rolling prairie. The great hardwood forests had not yet appeared so storms had a freer sweep. There were trees along the streams but the earthen forts were the best shelter the people had.

In the gully at the foot of the north wall of the Winchester fort, flowed White River. On the east was Sugar Creek. These streams met on the northeast corner of the fort and served as a moat for the two sides. The south wall stretched unbroken.

There was one gate on the east above the moat. It had covered ways for soldiers to get down to boats in the water below. Another gate opened to the west toward the prairie. This west gate had outworks. A semicircle of hard packed clay wall, one hundred and fifty feet across, extended beyond the gate to protect it. On top of all these walls were log stockades.

Think of the industry of a nation which could

THE THUNDER BIRD BROUGHT A GREAT STORM TO THE MOUND FORT.

do such building! They had no beasts of burden, like horses or oxen, to draw loads, no pulleys or power shovels, no wheels for barrows. All that dirt had to be dug with sticks and mussel shells and carried pickaback in baskets.

What a lot of teamwork under keen overseers! What good engineers! How powerful their rulers must have been and how tyrannical!

Thousands of men toiled like ants to pile up such earthen forts.

The Small Chieftain watched the villagers who tilled the land come running from the Thunder Bird that rode the storm. Toward the prairie gate hurtled crying children, mothers carrying babies, fathers with spears.

The men's long black hair swung out in braids behind them. Their scanty loin cloths billowed in the wind. The women's hair came undone and hung unkempt and wild. The children lost what garments they had and were dragged along, quite naked, sobbing with the rain.

Many lugged baskets of maize, stumbling and spilling as they ran. Starvation was the menace of spring among barbarians. It was always a question whether last year's supplies would hold out until new crops came in. Game was an uncertain source of meals. The only one sure of his dinner was he who carried it with him.

The wolf whelp threw back its head and howled when it thought it might never have another bone.

Amid all this confusion, the sun came up in splendor. The sun was the most beautiful thing the Mound-builders knew. To them the sun was the most perfect gift from the Great Good Spirit. From it came light. From it came heat. From it came fire. Fire! That consuming flame—that strongest help—that resistless force! Fire was the thing that gave small men power over big beasts.

The ruler of the Mound-builders' fort, its Big Chieftain, tried to control the panic which fear of the storm was starting. His red-gold Small Chieftain son stood ready to aid him. From the top of the central mound the Big Chieftain's voice began to chant a morning hymn, strong and full and clear. From force of habit, every one tried to join in its acclaim. Even the whelp rumbled in its throat.

This music was of the simplest kind. There were only three or four notes, repeated and prolonged. The bass of men, the contralto of women, the soprano of children, all singing in octaves with the effect of chords, swelling their chorus with drums, while flutes carried the obbligato, might make a chant most worthy, a true hymn of prayer and praise.

They may have begun bravely enough this morning, but the threats of the Thunder Bird undid

them. They clung together. They could not voice their feelings. The sun grew murky and was blotted out. The black sky—the frightful wind—the bursting cloud—overwhelmed them.

The logs of the west gate tipped inward. Water filled the fort. The east gate sprung loose and washed into Sugar Creek. Men and women and children were swept on a gigantic wave over the brink into the east gully. Dozens were hurt. Many were drowned. In the graveled eddies of this creek, spear heads, arrow points, stone pipes and stone whistles are still jumbled together where they sank.

On the deserted plain outside the fort, all the tiny red breakfast fires were gone. The bark houses flew to pieces. Food in caches went adrift. It floated away.

The high mound in the center of the fort was slapped by the Thunder Bird's swinging tail. The central blaze on the mound, the source of all village hearth fires, became in one instant a shower of sparks, in the next, wet ashes. Not one coal was left. The old fire maker was thrown from the mound and badly hurt.

The gay Small Chieftain was appalled at this bad luck. It was part of his duty to help keep some light forever showing on the mound. Without its blaze, in a shining, ever present flame, the

broken fort and the huddled people were in awful danger. Suppose when night came they had no torches? Spears were only half a defense against the powers of darkness.

The injured fire maker could do nothing. But fire they must have. When the Thunder Bird had passed, wolves would leave their lairs along White River gorges. As soon as sunset faded, they would have hunted out this big game of wounded and unprotected folks. Wolves would attack in packs.

The Small Chieftain held his head between his hands and thought on this. There was another enemy, he dared not name aloud, but whispered to himself, "Nomads!" Ferocious men in wandering tribes, worse than the wolves, were quick to catch the news of any storm-broken fort from the Thunder Bird and passed the word among themselves of the time to strike it.

Nomads might come in hundreds.

In twelve hours or so, a battle of men with wolves might begin. A battle with cunning savages might follow.

He was battered and thumped and scratched. The Thunder Bird had pecked him black and blue. There was no help in the fort itself. No one could start fire from wet wood and ashes. No one knew how. He must get fire from the neighbors.

Catching up a clay vase, a ventilated fire vase, he struggled through the imploring hands of survivors and ran against the wind to the west gate. Like a stone from his own sling he was off across the open country.

Not to the Newcastle town on the west, where the mounds, built in the forms of stars and circles and cubes for special ceremonies, were different from his own cone-shaped mound. That town must have been torn, perhaps destroyed by the Thunder Bird.

He would go south to Trilobite Town, where Richmond is now. Trilobite Town shone like a beacon in his fancy. Set upon a rocky peak of Silurian, above the canyon of the Whitewater, it capped a long, westward trending ridge, on which storms split then as they do now and went billowing to the north and south, leaving Trilobite Town almost immune from the Thunder Bird's wrath.

At Trilobite Town, then, he would find coals if any were left in this region.

Out of the welter behind the Small Chieftain leaped the half-tamed wolf whelp. It came to heel. Its master's heart lightened. With this faithful friend for companion, what were the thirty miles to Trilobite Town? Nothing!

The Small Chieftain took a path first engineered by a dinosaur, packed down by mastodons and fol-

lowed by buffalo. 'Twas a good route then and is still the best one, going south.

The air was cold. Rain fell from the wings of the Thunder Bird. There was the greatest need of haste. The Small Chieftain had a horror of the hunger periods which came after any flood. All their cached food was destroyed. The people might suffer before the hunters could bring home meat; surely starve unless they ate wolf meat. The wolves, because they were wolves, often devoured their own wounded and left nothing behind them that could be eaten by men.

Starvation was chasing him—run—run—run! Faster—faster—faster!

Neck and neck with the wolf whelp, the Small Chieftain swam three branches of the Whitewater River. He ran mile after mile—mile after mile—straight away south.

It was noon, when under the gray sky the twinkle of a mound fire caught his eye. Trilobite Town!

Soon he was shouting and the whelp was howling at its gate of logs. Faces full of caution and of curiosity peeped over the stockade on the earthen wall. Black eyes under black hair examined him. A few words, a gesture or so, and lean red-gold arms opened a wicket in the stockade gate. He was surrounded by dripping wet and half-naked

men, full of sympathy for his damaged fort. They frowned at the whelp but smiled at him. Kind hands filled his vase with coals. A long distance torch was given him. It would burn hotter and stronger with the draft made by his running, better and bigger as he neared his own fort.

From his ear he took the pearl. 'Twas his greatest treasure and a rich gift to any little town. He laid it on the Trilobite altar with the gesture of a chieftain. He did not allow himself one sigh of regret, for no one could buy fire or sell it. It must be had by an exchange of courtesies. Fire was life.

The puppy, no longer a mere wolf whelp, but becoming with every mile more and more of a boy's dog, had changed by its master's need to the best of chums. It scratched its back on some handy fossils, stretched out flat and went to sleep. But when the fire was ready, it yelped two yelps and was off with the boy. Never again would it answer the call of the pack.

Without food, without drink, without rest, this Small Chieftain, who had run five miles an hour for six hours, turned about to run five miles an hour for another six hours.

It was not too very much of a run, that sixty miles in one day. Any Mound-builder youth, high born and specially trained for endurance could have

done it. Some full-grown Indian lads of to-day can do it.

The path was smooth with only three swollen fords to swim. Tiresome? Yes. But the Small Chieftain knew it could be done, knew that he must do it. And the whelp? Any wolf's first business is the chase. It now ran in the trail of the torch.

The rain ceased. The Thunder Bird went flopping away. The boy's chest was heavy and his eyes were dull, the whelp's tongue was hanging out, when they reached that highest spot in Indiana, more than halfway back to the fort. They had run altogether about forty-five of the sixty miles. All at once the whelp stopped and stiffened. The Small Chieftain, very weary, left the path and peered over the bluff, looking past the point of the whelp's nose.

Distracted people are always asking, "Why, oh, why, must every boy have a dog?" That question had a perfect answer three thousand years ago when this boy put his hand on the whelp's head and said in a language any wolf could understand, *"Good* doggie! Good *doggie!"*

For on a ledge below them, a panther hung over the creek like a cat over a goldfish bowl, scooping up fish by the pawful.

Here was news!

Fish were coming up the flooded creeks. They were leaping the falls. Fish meant food. Make the good luck signs! That was what the wolf whelp's find meant, joyful news.

MOUND-BUILDER ARTISTS DREW ANIMAL CARTOONS.

From under the top layer of matted grass, the Small Chieftain pulled some tufts dry enough to light with his torch. His hands shook with excitement but there was no one near enough to see his weakness, so un-chieftain-like. The whelp licked its master's feet with anxious whines.

The boy fixed a smudge, laid his loin cloth over it, counted seconds by his heart beats, lifted the cloth off quickly, counted again as a puff of smoke rose, laid the cloth over again, counted a different number, took it off. All this he did two dozen times, spelling three different words.

In the clearing afternoon air, his smoke signals floated in patches like tiny clouds.

If the people in the fort could read his message, the ruler, his father, would send bearers with torches to be lighted from his. Fishermen with spears and nets would come to his fire. The people would be fed with fish, the fort would be defended by torches. And he himself might be given a blue-black swallow's wing tip for his hair. Such a feather was high honor for a runner. It would say to all, "Swift as a swallow is he who wears this feather."

He was eighteen. He wanted to be something more than a Small Chieftain, son of the Chieftain Ruler. He wanted to earn a name for himself. He wanted to be called "The Swallow."

Middle West storms are nothing but short bursts of the Thunder Bird's temper, soon over. In regret for such brief periods of pounding wings and flashing eyes, that troublesome fowl follows them with afterglows of splendor and long twilights of beauty that no tropical lands can ever show.

So the Small Chieftain stood on one aching foot, shaded his far-sighted eyes with a smoky hand, and studied the heavens.

Good weather was promised. The sun came out in glory and strengthened his hopes. Who looked at the sun might see his sky writing, those trailing

cirrus bits of smoke, spelling the same three words over and over.

More than a dozen miles to the northwest, on lower land, in the broken fort, the able-bodied Mound-builders toiled without stopping to repair the broken gates. The wounded ones, down-hearted, cold, hungry and poorly bandaged, leaned on their spears. In dread of night, they stared out through the gaps in the stockades, at the wrecks of their homes on the prairie.

They thought they heard the far-off howl of wolves. They dared not listen for the swish of arrows and the war whoops of the Nomads. Those death-dealing Nomads! After the rain stopped, they had lifted their drooping heads to look about them sadly. They stared at the sun and then at the little clouds traveling in groups as they turned to gold and then to silver.

Those little clouds seemed to be smiling at them, calling to them. Every face brightened. Every back stiffened. All the men in the fort straightened on their feet and pointed.

All at once a shout went up.

The long and short puffs, like notes in music, were tuned to their desire.

They read in excited chorus:

"Fire! Fish! Food!"

"Fire! Fish! Food!"

II

MEDICINE MAN

THE blue-black swallow's wing feathers in the Small Chieftain's black, black hair, dipped this way and that, in short sweeping flights, as his head darted from one side to the other.

He was looking up and down the path he traveled and back and forth to the paths on either hand, as they joined his own.

By these numerous side tracks, all leading toward the main trail, he knew he was nearing the great mound city of Cincinnati.

It had a fine location above the Ohio River. A wall enclosed it. Its lookout mound, thirty-five feet high, could be seen from afar. The upper plain was covered with lines of embankments. As a military station of immense strength it was famous everywhere. It had taken a strategic point and was able to hold all the hills round about.

This walled city of Cincinnati had hundreds and hundreds of inhabitants. They were laborious, as well as numerous, to be able to build such a system of mound defenses.

Like all good scouts, these mound-building people used the material at hand. There was plenty of soft dirt everywhere. They mixed it with stones or with logs and plastered it with clay.

With it they built solid, broad foundations for their houses of bark, their stockades of poles, their shelters of branches. Such good foundations were these, that thirty centuries of rain and frost would not be able to break them down.

A Mound-builder's tools were small one-man implements. His diggers were made of sharp sticks, fresh-water clam shells, thin flat stones and the shoulder blades of deer.

He could not get down into subsoil nor break hardpan. When he built he used top soil, the looser dirt that might be moved with what shovels he had. So he put his foundations on the ground instead of down in it.

When the Small Chieftain, who had crossed from Sugar Creek into the Whitewater valley and then into the Miami, came to some headland, overlooking the river and its lowlands, he could always see a group of mounds. Every promontory had one.

Any of these spots, with its far view, was apt to be a place of worship, set in some of the open groves that were the first temples. Like a village church steeple, the central mound of such a place, very high and steep, pointed toward heaven with

its tiny flame of light. There was an altar mound also.

Nearly every altar was close to another mound which had a shallow pottery bowl to receive offerings of value, like pearls and copper, mica and shells. Carved stone ornaments, engraved volcanic glass and polished flint weapons were rich presents to put in a bowl.

Around the altar there was sometimes a low circle of earthwork like a curved stone seat in a stadium.

And near these sacred places, just as a village cemetery is close to the country church, were many burial mounds. It was too difficult to put the departed ones under the ground. The ground had to be put above them. So the mound was a tomb as well as a tombstone and was treated with respect.

On the map he was making, in his own mind, as he ran the Small Chieftain marked all such spots, not with a cross, but with a circle. A circle was the building unit of the Mound people. Their first thought was of a circle. They began to plan with it in mind.

There were several large towns and forts on the way to Piqua, Dayton and Hamilton. Hamilton, itself, had a wall enclosing seventeen acres. Half a dozen or so miles south of Hamilton was a huge defense, Colerain, where a nine-foot wall, with

stockades on top of that, surrounded ninety-five acres. The walls were irregular, following the lines of the cliffs, but everything within the walls, so the Small Chieftain heard, was built on a pattern of handsome curves.

To the boy's eager eyes, these grass-grown forts and green mounds were city sights. They meant lots of people and many events. Something new might happen any minute.

The houses also were green and gay. He liked to watch them being made. But the wolf whelp, who ran with him, gave impatient sniffs when it stopped. It thought there was too much smell of man.

In the round earth foundations of such a house, saplings were set like posts. Green branches were woven in and out to make a neat pattern for the sides of the house. When it was ready for the roof, the tops of the saplings were bent over, tied together and thatched. Living in such a city was like camping out even after the house walls were plastered with clay for winter.

It was past noon of an April day when the Small Chieftain noticed the curve of his feather in his shadow as he ran along. When he stood with his face to the north, the feather marked the hours on the path, like the finger of a sundial.

He was proud of this feather. It was his for-

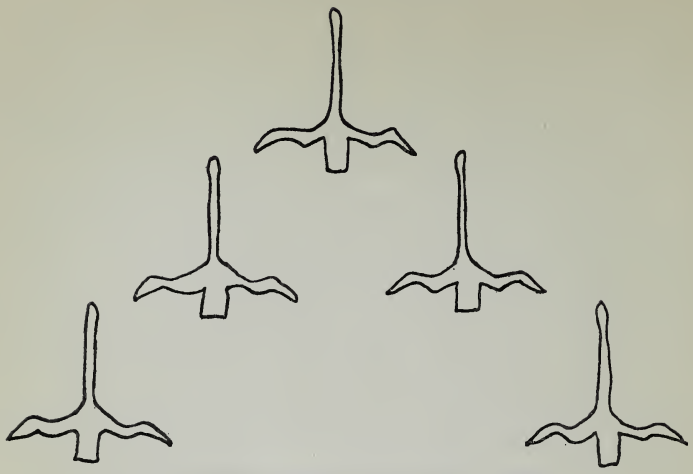
tune. To all who saw it, the feather said, "I am the reward for good work." He had earned the name that he wanted. The "Swallow" was what he was now called. With the feather as his capital stock, he had started out to seek his fortune.

At two o'clock, Mound-builder, swallow-wing, sun time, he said, "We must rest before we enter the town. Down! Whelp! Down!" But the whelp was not yet docile. It would not "Down" at the first command. Snarling, it rushed back and forth to defy him.

A small flint knife and a sling were the Swallow's only weapons. His whelp could easily have torn him to pieces. But he began to whistle softly, getting louder and shriller by degrees. The whelp growled and shook its head. The whistle grew piercing and high. Like a gun-shy dog, the whelp suffered acutely when a sudden explosive or too sharp noise struck its ears.

Pain got the better of savagery. The whelp went "Down," pawing its ears and whimpering for mercy. The happy Swallow laughed and fondled this dangerous pet who could be subdued by a whistle. "*Good* doggie! Good *doggie!*" Then he shook a forefinger, "You must not enter a town with hollow flanks like a beggar. Go get yourself a rabbit dinner while I eat my parched corn."

There were trees between the Swallow and a



WILD GEESE WERE FLYING NORTH.

stream. Another stream ran into this one and out again, eddied and formed a bayou almost under the city walls. With every big flood it changed its banks and was now a gleaming spread of water making a lake. Like Miami Fort at the mouth of the Miami River, it surprised him by its size and prepared him for the sights of the walled and moated Cincinnati.

To rest for the run into the city, he lay flat on the ground. At his ease he listened to the gurgle of the eddies. Idly glancing through the tree tops, he saw what he would not have noticed had he been walking or running.

Faint gray triangles were traveling across the sky, whispering, "Honk—honk—honk!"

"Flying high on account of the rains, delayed by the winds," he thought as he watched the long, long flocks. Some were dropping lower, looking for a water hole. One triangle, exhausted, fell into the bayou like a pelting of hail.

The Swallow called the whelp, "We will take some geese to the ruling Chieftain of Cincinnati. Everybody likes game."

He sprang to the bank and plunged down into the crowded flock. The geese were too tired to rise. He meant to capture several with his bare hands.

He grabbed one goose by the neck, only to be carried under water and shaken. He was dragged back and forth; he was beaten by strong wings. The goose was in its native element. It made new rules for the fight every minute and changed its tactics each round. The goose ducked him. The contest was a water hazard, a wrestling match, an athletic feat.

The whelp, awkward at this new play, whined and bit and thrashed about. Together they bagged four. That was all they could carry any distance. Instead of running lightly they had to trudge steadily. Often the whelp's load would slip off and delay them.

The Swallow, ready to go inside the city walls, felt as many another country lad has done when

he approached. Under the slanting rays of the afternoon sun, it was the most beautiful place any ambitious boy could hope to enter.

Choosing a dramatic moment, as all clever adventurers must do, the Swallow and the whelp appeared, to the astonished eyes of the town, silhouetted against the orange sunset, just before supper time.

Wing tips in the Swallow's hair showed plainly. The goose pinions were widely spread as though the runner had wings. The effect was startling.

A moment's complete silence greeted this strange guest.

There was a buzzing among the red-gold citizens. They advanced in a crowd. The Swallow stepped upon a bowlder as upon a stage. The whelp stood rampant with one forefoot on the bowlder at its master's feet. It had such a set of fangs that all the common dogs loafing about put their tails between their legs and vanished.

A sharp glance round told the Swallow there were no supper fires. The old men were mourning, the young men stood dejected. He announced in a clear, loud voice, "I am the runner who brings good news!" He repeated this three times, each time in a different dialect of curious Indian words of many syllables.

They understood him. They approved with loud

THE MEDICINE MAN WHIRLED HIMSELF INTO THE CROWD.

shouts. Then he called, "In the big bayou, northwest, are more geese!"

There was a scramble for bows and arrows, for slings and nets. The hunters were off even as the Swallow dropped his geese for the villagers to pick up.

But he stayed on his pedestal and the wolf stood at bay until the excited townsmen brought their Medicine Man, gaudily dressed, wearing a fearsome headdress and thumping a fancy rattle, to meet the strange runner who must have been conjured from the sky.

The Medicine Man was a handsome fellow, straight, sinewy and middle-aged. His nose was proud, his eyes shrewd and his mouth set in laughter wrinkles.

Now this Medicine Man had dramatic ideas of his own. He was in a serious position, he needed help.

His forty years of keen observation came to his aid. He knew that some handsome youth who was popular, who could pass the endurance tests and show his first scalp taken in the best warrior manner to the elders and counselors of his tribe might be hailed as a chieftain for a vacancy by the enthusiasm of his nation. Every barbaric clan loved a hero if he was young and bold.

But the position of a medicine man was an en-

tirely different matter. It had to be earned by years of hard thinking, practical work and moral stamina. No medicine man was young. The real ruler of any Mound city, the sure power behind the chieftain's throne, was its medicine man. He was the court of last resort for the elders and counselors. He must have the experience and the wisdom and the strength to control the stolid, stubborn, rich old warriors who gave prestige to their town and who held the pearl-embroidered wampum belts which were its money bags. It was they who said what chieftain might be acclaimed. 'Twas the medicine man who made up their minds for them.

Nothing could be done without the elders' and counselors' consent, nothing bought without their pearls and wampum. The medicine man never touched their money. He was content to handle their politics as he saw fit.

That something out of the usual had happened to this Cincinnati Medicine Man, the Swallow could feel plainly. There was a grim necessity for making a change in the condition of the stricken town. The Swallow was prickling all over as he watched this Medicine Man who radiated personality.

Dancing forward with a stately step, the Medicine Man was followed by his assistant conjurer, who circled round and round him. He called out

in a voice that could be heard by every person within the walls.

"Oh, noble youth, bearer of gifts," he cried. "I thank you for answering my summons. My incantations have brought you here to feed my people. The spirits of the air have told you to hold the fire which I shall create with my magic swastika!"

The Swallow was thrilled. This was adventure! He played up to the Medicine Man's cue. His sudden short shrill whistle warned the whelp that it must mind his sharp, "Down! Whelp! Down!"

The wolf sprang clear of the bowlder. As the crowd fell back, it flattened at the Medicine Man's feet in an attitude of subjection. That the whelp dropped on the nearest spot and that the Medicine Man's dance *happened* to put him beside the spot were not noticed by the crowds. They saw only the finished picture—a wild beast making obeisance to their Medicine Man.

Like an act in a theater, these things were done to entertain the people, to interest them, to start some work to help them. That clever Medicine Man knew the distressed folks needed something to distract their minds.

Using the dialect hardest for the citizens to understand, he spoke to the Swallow in a low tone,

"The heavy flood drowned our ruler. We all climbed upon the biggest mounds to escape the Thunder Bird's rising waters. In courtesy, as we always do in spring, we gave the Chieftain the highest and safest mound. The wind came in such strong gusts that he could not keep his footing. His moccasins slipped. With his two guards he fell into the flood and was borne away."

Then he added, "Our fires are out. Stand by to help me start one."

It is easy to say, "Barbarians can start a fire by rubbing two dry sticks together. It is only a matter of friction."

It is not so easy to do. Indeed, it is so hard to do, that men have traveled miles and miles to borrow coals; so hard to do, that every town kept its own fire maker who had been trained for this difficult task. Other men were allowed to use his tools but other men seldom could make a fire with them. The fire maker was a magician.

This Medicine Man of the deluged town was glad to have the picturesque runner and the terrible wolf posed near him to keep back interruptions while he arranged his punk, his dry leaves, his shavings, his fat pine and seasoned faggots. He got out his fire rod. Upon the rod he slipped his swastika.

Swastika! Emblem of the sun—symbol of the

revolving heavens—old as the human race—the world-wide sign of good luck!

The Medicine Man set the rod in a cup. He made incantations; he used ceremonies. The townsmen formed a circle about the fire maker and the winged guest with the crouching beast. They watched for the fire to come. The Medicine Man wound a stout thong upon the rod and twirled the swastika. Swastika! The nearest approach to a wheel the New World had!

He worked and worked over his magic. He twirled and twirled. He sweated and sweated. He worked and worked and worked. He twirled and twirled and twirled. He sweated and sweated and sweated. It was merely a matter of friction. He was creating the friction.

After a long, long time, the spark struck. The punk caught, the dry leaves blazed, the shavings held them, the fat pine burned steadily and the faggots were on fire. The Medicine Man sighed with relief and fatigue.

The people cheered.

Some ran with coals, starting fires in a dozen places. Light and warmth and cosy red clay hearths heartened everybody. The hunters were coming in. Roast goose was not so far ahead.

The Medicine Man gave the little boys, who were hanging about, a handful of marbles to play

with in the firelight. He promised a maple sugar lump to any bigger boys who would rake the débris from the paths with the crooked sticks that were their hoes.

To some of the younger men he hinted that they ought to take torches and run around the new recreation oval. Some place in its six hundred feet by eight hundred, it might need repairs. They must hunt for washes in its earthen walls.

Having divided his people's activities and their attention, he came back to the Swallow, who had relaxed his pose and was sitting on the bowlder.

"Stand by me in the full light," the Medicine Man said in a low tone. "Tell me who you are." His manner was confidential.

"I am the son of the ruler at Winchester."

"What are you doing here?"

"Going a roundabout way to offer services as runner to the Biggest Chief, our Great Grand Ruler, at his Capital in Chillicothe. My father wanted me to see this city and its famous Medicine Man," and the naughty Swallow perked up one elfin eyebrow at his questioner.

The Medicine Man laughed outright. He liked and he trusted this lively Swallow. He needed an unusual messenger.

He said, "Tell the Biggest Chief for me that

the high waters have filled the caves up-river on the Ohio, that the Cave Men are moving cross country toward the Seven Caves. They are a degraded race, without fire and without clothes. They do not braid their hair, have no spears and do not understand the value of pearls. They are strong but ignorant; if the Nomads meet them, those wanderers may incite them to raid our towns."

The Swallow grew serious as he promised to deliver this message word for word.

"Take this pouch of corn, hide it in your loin cloth so that you stand with free hands," was the next command. "Look you! A feast is preparing. What else do you see?"

"I see the elders and counselors with their heads together," faltered the Swallow in a half whisper. He was excited by the suppressed force in the Medicine Man's voice. "I see the young warriors bringing out a burnished copper suit of armor, very rich and beautiful."

The Medicine Man nodded and went on earnestly, "Hark then! Make sure of yourself. The feast will be ready about the time the Moon rises —the Wild Goose Moon! When the Moon rises —I think—I am almost sure—they mean to acclaim me Chieftain of this tribe, the ruler of the city. I have planned to make them do so. Your presence has helped them to that decision. Now you

must aid me to receive that honor with fitting dignity."

His next words were strange. They were passionate. "There is going to be a big war, my son. It is coming fast—war which means life or death to the Mound-builders. I want to go into it. I shall take the part of a warrior—be young again! I want to get this place as chieftain of my own city of Cincinnati so I may be sent to Fort Ancient with the fighting men. I'm tired of being politic. I want to give up my high state as Medicine Man and become an armed chieftain. I must have one more grand chance for action and adventure before I die."

The Swallow, amazed, began to tremble. His teeth chattered. Nothing like this had ever happened to him before. The Medicine Man had to put a strong hand on his shoulder to steady the boy.

"If the young warriors bring the armor to this spot, step forward as one with authority and take it from them with confidence." His fingers tightened on the Swallow's arm muscles. "Stop shaking. I am as stirred as you are. This is the most important hour of my life. Assist me to start something bigger than a fire."

The Swallow gulped and said, "I will."

"Pass the armor to the old warriors. Be slow

and formal. When they put it on me, be the first to kneel before my mound." He spoke hurriedly with much emphasis, "Give this carved pipe to the Biggest Chief from the Medicine Man of Cincinnati, who is now a ruler and his loyal subject. The pipe will tell him that Cincinnati offers an alliance with the Capital for purposes of defense against the Nomads. Remember!"

There was a great shouting.

The young warriors came forward with the armor. The Swallow gave a hand to escort the Medicine Man three steps to the top of a low platform mound. Then he came down and took the armor from the bearers as though he were doing them a favor. He passed it to the old warriors with a manner of supreme elegance.

His hands were cold and he felt as though he had not eaten for days. But he had been commanded to do it and he followed orders boldly.

Then he escorted the old warriors to the platform mound. They decorated the Medicine Man. He was plainly their best citizen and their most honored one.

Never had such a ceremony been better managed.

It pleased the eyes, the ears and the hearts of the city.

There were singing and laughter and happy words.

The big round moon was rising. Moonlight and

firelight mingled. Twinkling sparks of light were reflected from every angle of the shining copper armor.

The face of the Medicine Man was all aglow. His eyes were as bright as stars. The Swallow kneeled at his feet, the first to offer homage. The wolf whelp, the only dog present, went "Down" as though he wanted to show friendship.

The man and boy looked at one another in perfect accord. There was a lively understanding between them. A lifelong friendship had begun.

All the bright lights in their wavering made black and uncertain shadows. The eyes of the spectators were not able to follow all the movements on the platform mound, so the Swallow stepped back into the dusk and was seen no more.

This Swallow who had appeared in the full blaze of the sun—brought food—fire—good luck—a new ruler—had in the silver beams of the moon turned into mist and disappeared.

He had come by magic. He had gone by magic.

Great was their Chieftain, the Medicine Man!

III

CAVE DWELLER

A HUNGRY boy was hunting food. He followed the tracks of a bear that had picked high ground between the course of a rivulet and a line of sink holes.

It was a May morning, cool and cloudy. Trees were growing beside the stream. There was a fringe of them where he walked. Far behind this boy, but gaining on him, ran the Swallow. Many tree trunks separated them.

The first boy went openly, without looking back. The Swallow's pursuit was a secret thing.

The Swallow had a high idea of the value of the message he carried. He must not be delayed. But there was something so strange about the hunter that he was curious. Why not watch?

The whelp did not like the smell of the bear tracks. Wolves hunt in packs; a lone wolf is cautious. Neither did the whelp approve the odor of the boy, who seemed to be carrying something white, perhaps a pelt of white fur or a garment made of white feathers woven together.

The Swallow seldom saw anything pure white. He was reminded of winter snows and spring blossoms and summer clouds as the floating strands about the hunting boy filled him with wonder. The whelp's nose twitched.

The hunter so much needed a meal, that even while he stuck to the big game trail, his eyes peering forward, searched the saplings for pigeons, the thickets for rabbits. Here, there, everywhere, he looked for something that could be chewed and swallowed.

There was no cress in the rivulet, no last year's chinquapin in the sink holes. Blackbirds chorused above him. Too high! Blue grass nodded. Not edible!

Rain was coming. The air grew colder. Hurrying on, the boy wrapped the long white strands of blowing stuff about him like a cloak. Ears alert, he trotted faster.

Then the Swallow changed to double quick. The whelp hung back. The air, darkened by the moving clouds and shadowed by the trees, had a pale green tint. The woods seemed unreal as though they might dissolve in mist.

It was a lonely place with few trails. Not a town was in sight. There were no people hereabouts. For the Swallow noticed one thing which the hunter had missed. The streams were full of

fresh-water mussels. They could be seen when any one looked straight down into clear water from a height.

These mussel beds had never been disturbed. There was plenty in them to feed an army. And pearls enough among them, possibly, to enrich a chieftain. He stopped to mark the spot in his memory. He had discovered a new food supply in the mussels and an untouched pearl fishery in their shells. He must report the find. He wondered why this region was deserted. Was it unsafe?

He put his hand upon the whelp's head and watched his course. When the hunter topped a knoll and paused, indistinct in the shadows, he looked as white as though covered all over with fur.

This was uncanny. The Swallow's thumbs began to prickle. He plunged ahead. At the next rise, he could see the young hunter against the sky line. The white figure was outlined upon a gray cloud. The white fur was not fur. It was hair, white hair. The boy's body also was white—white!

There was no such thing as a white boy. There never had been. The Swallow knew that the peoples of the Americas were all of the same stock. The Middle West Mound-builders were of a light golden red. Nomads and outdoor tribes, exposed to the weather, were of a darker red. Eskimos

and Cave Dwellers, who had little sunlight, were more yellow than red. All were cousins under the skin and that skin was constantly going back to type—yellow-red, but never to white. There was no such thing as a white Indian.

This white creature could not be a boy. It was a spirit of the forest. Drawing down his brows and cupping his hands over them for a long range view, the Swallow found that he could see through the spirit's form—could see the sky and trees beyond it!

Utterly amazed, then, the Swallow froze in his moccasins. The whelp, feeling its master's awe and catching a glimpse of the wraith-like figure, began to howl. Weird echoes wakened in that dismal wood.

The white one, swaying lightly, as though his toes did not need to touch the earth, turned about and gazed at them. Then he caught at his long blowing hair, through whose locks any one could see the world beyond. He wrapped it round his body which was white as white could be but not transparent.

He stood so for several minutes, regarding them. Presently he swayed toward them.

The whelp put its tail between its legs and fled.

The Swallow could not move. He believed in the good spirits of light and in the evil forces of

darkness. He had seen their works. The difference between good and evil was very great.

The Swallow had so strong a sense of the value of his errand to the Biggest Chief at Chillicothe, that he wondered if this good spirit had come to help him through a dangerous land, so cold and forlorn.

In the half light, the white boy was beautiful, delicately lovely. His skin was pale as dogwood blossoms, his hair like the milky way, a shining mist. Brows and lashes had no color in them. The eyes turned calmly upon the Swallow were tinted like a rose. The Swallow was never to forget the feeling that crept over him and filled his heart.

Gone was his pride in his strength as a runner. He lost his arrogance as a secret messenger. He grew humble as he stood there in the presence of this gentle white spirit.

For the first time he knew it was not enough for him to do another person's bidding faithfully. Passionately, now, he wanted to have a part in some big deed, to begin a man's task of his own and to go on with it to a strong finish.

Perhaps this white one would show him how to help the Nomad threatened Mound towns, how to save the Mound-builders from destruction by sav-

ages. He spread out his hands in a gesture of supplication.

"Oh, Most Beautiful One," he cried earnestly, "I am at your service. Command me."

The "Most Beautiful One" smiled. It was a kind and friendly smile, but not a heavenly one.

Quite suddenly the Swallow knew that this white boy was a human being; utterly different from any one he had ever seen, but human.

Eighteen years old, possibly, he was well developed and graceful, but without color. Neither the Swallow, himself, nor any of the Mound-builders, had ever heard of a man without color. Among a million dark-skinned, dark-eyed men, this was the only blond.

In one of the oldest of dialects, this white one, the Albino, began to talk. The need he voiced was a thing older than any language, "My tribe is hungry."

Pointing out the bear tracks, he showed the weapon he carried. It was a handstone. He had picked it with care, choosing it so that one part was more jagged than the other. With one end to hack and the other to hammer, it was rough round the middle for a finger hold. Three pounds was its weight.

If he could fell a bear with it, he would have a

feast for his tribe and a pelt to tie about himself in cold weather. That was the one and only way to get a suit of clothes, he declared.

What the Albino had to say was astonishing to the Swallow. The words in which it was said were so old-fashioned that he doubted his ears. He

FIGURES WERE CUT OUT OF SHEET MICA.

could hardly understand such speech. Even to a runner who had to translate many dialects, it seemed crude and obsolete. He knew it must be one of the earlier forms which had branched off from the parent language of all the American tribes. It was a word-group jargon, without declensions, so simple as to seem childish.

Handstones had been out of style for years and years.

And to be talking about his first clothes!

Now the Swallow's loin cloth was brief, not much more than a pocket to hold a few small necessities. But it was clothes. So was a pair of moccasins and so was the copper ribbon that neatly bound his swallow feather in place.

This naked, barefooted, loose-haired boy bewildered him.

The idea of tackling a bear with a handstone was braver than brave. The Swallow's notion of sportsmanship was to offer himself, his sling and his stone knife to the hunter. After calling the wolf whelp back, he did so.

The Albino's plan was to hit the bear in the pit of its stomach with the handstone. That would make it double up. The Swallow must strike it, first in one eye and then in the other with stones from his sling. Then the Albino would recover the handstone, pounding at close range while the Swallow used the flint knife.

The whelp's instinct was to go back for the wolf pack. After the bear was down, it might rush in and take a bite, rush out, then rush in again, after the manner of all wolves with big game. A small beast can harrow a large one past all endurance.

So the whelp sat on its haunches during this boys'

talk. It cocked an impatient ear, as if it thought the whole affair was very foolish. Nobody but boys would take such a risk.

But the spoor was fresh, the hunters started and the whelp had to go along.

Rain began to fall, drumming on the earth as though it were hollow, as indeed it was. Nowhere in the whole world were there greater marvels than lay beneath the flying feet of these three hunters. For the rain, drizzling round them, was doing chemical tricks more curious than magic.

Rain drops snatch a tiny bit of carbon dioxide gas from the air and make with it a weak carbonic acid. Carbonic acid dissolves limestone as wild gooseberry juice dissolves maple sugar. These hills had their rocks in layers like an Indian meal cake. The filling was of limestone.

The gentlest rain falling into a crack of limestone, melts some of it and then washes the melted part away. If there is a layer of hard rock above the soft lime stone and another one below it, which the rain cannot dissolve, there is an empty space left between the upper and lower hard layers after the soft limestone filling is gone.

This causes big holes and little holes under the ground, makes caves everywhere. Caves are mysterious and splendid. Stone flowers bloom on their walls. There are fluted pillars in them. Big corri-

dors are jeweled with calcites, sparkling with crystals like dreams of fairyland—exquisite—fantastic—mammoth.

Over such a wondrous hidden cavern, full of secret stairways and plunging cascades, lying in darkness below them, they chased the bear.

Rain, wind, lightning and thunder increased. The bear was a hundred feet ahead. It looked immense, as big as a giant—one of those terrible brown bears.

They stopped short. It smelled them; it saw them; it turned upon them. Just then came a sky-splitting flash. Light dazzled them. A dry hickory tree burst into flame. The bear clapped its paws to its head as a wounded man might have done.

On the instant—blinding—sulphurous—another flash—another crash! The bear fell headlong. A sink hole swallowed it. The tree burned and toppled into the hole upon the stricken bear. The odor of singed hair struck the boys' nostrils and drew them to the brink. They took a peep. The bear was lying at the bottom of the sink hole in a bed of coals.

It was smoking. Soon came the smell of roasting meat. 'Twas very inviting. Delicious! Their mouths watered.

They made a path into the sink hole. One side of it opened into a cave. They put dry sticks on the

fire and watched it light up big rooms in the cave.

The savory roast was very good. The Albino found cooked food different from anything he had ever tasted. He had expected to eat the bear raw just as any of his tribe would have eaten it. Or exactly as the bear would have eaten him if the lightning had struck something else instead of the bear. One bear was a good meal for his men. Wild fruits and nuts and eggs and roots were their diet most of the time. Often and often they were hungry. They were half-starved now. That was the reason he was hunting for his tribe.

The Swallow showed him how fire could be kept in a trap and made to slave at cooking all the year round.

And the Albino said that where he came from, he was nearly warm enough without fire. But he was glad to learn about hearthstones.

With his long hair like a wet blanket hanging round him and gooseflesh standing white instead of blue all over him, he came soon to appreciate the notion of a home fire kept burning. He would never forget it or let it go out. Already his bare toes were in the warm ashes while the Swallow told him about cooking pots, baked fish and succotash.

Together they ran back and forth to the rivulet. Lily pads were pinned up to make bowls to carry mussels for the barbecue. The pins were old thorns,

big and stout, from last year. With his flint knife the Swallow showed the Albino how to open a shell carefully to save any pearl that might be in it. The Albino was so pleased with the way the knife worked, that the Swallow had to make him a present of it.

But this white boy did not care for the pearls. He did not know they were money. He had never heard of money. Their value meant nothing to him.

So the Swallow gave his empty corn pouch to his new friend, tied it round his neck like a gorget and commanded him to keep—keep—keep every pearl he found. Some of them were handsome and large and round, very valuable. "Put them in the pouch!"

Then they explored the first rooms in the cave.

Picking up a piece of whetstone, the Albino made a picture of a bear upon the cave wall. He was a clever artist. The bear looked natural. It was moving along.

As they went farther and farther into the cave, the Swallow became uneasy. The whelp liked the dim rocky caverns. It thought what a cozy lair such a place would be. In some places they found salt, in others, flint. There was plenty of sweet water. Less and less light followed them.

Gradually the Swallow discovered that the Albino could see in the dark, see better in the dusk than in the firelight!

This was more than his nerves could endure. He turned about and hurried to the open air to be met by another surprise, very disagreeable.

THE SORCERER CAME FORTH IN HIS FULL REGALIA.

For the odor of the feast had blown over the ridge. It brought the Albino's tribe who had been trying all this time to catch up with their leader.

Dozens of Cave Men were strung along the rise like relay racers. Most of them were scrambling so hurriedly that they were coming up on all fours as though they were beasts.

The only one who wore any clothes was their sorcerer. He was masked and decorated with a flowing scarf. A pair of antlers made of light weight wood and covered with copper foil were set on top of his head.

To the Swallow these men seemed horrible. Their unkempt hair, their naked bodies, specially their bare feet, offended him. Their eyes were dull,

their faces dumb. They had a greedy look. He had a feeling that they might eat him. Some tribes were cannibals. The smile painted on the sorcerer's mask had an unpleasant-looking set of large teeth. The Swallow backed away. But the whelp bounded to his side, all fangs and bristles.

The Albino, as delicately lovely as a mountain laurel in bloom, swayed beside the Swallow and pointed a white hand which held the newly acquired flint knife, toward the barbecue at the cave mouth.

The hulking brutes, who might not have looked so gross, compared with something other than the slender Albino, obeyed the gesture. They were grotesque and uncouth, as they fell on the food like wild animals. One almost stood on his head to dig out hot mussels. Another hugged a hollow stump full of discarded bones as he might have clasped a begging bowl. He liked marrow.

Exactly as though the Albino were the father of all these starving people, that white one said in a gentle tone, "Poor things, they have not eaten for several days. Never before have they tasted food cooked. I can take better care of them here. This will be a safer home for them than the caves where they were flooded out and had to leave."

All at once the Swallow's puzzled brain cleared. He repeated to himself the words of the message he was carrying.

"Cave Men, flooded out on the Ohio, are moving cross country toward Seven Caves. They are a degraded race, living without fire and without clothes. They do not braid their hair, have no spears and no idea of the value of pearls, strong but ignorant—if they join with the Nomads—" that was what the Cincinnati Medicine Man had said.

His heart swelled as he saw what had happened to him. Here and now was his chance to do something for the defense of the Mound forts against the Nomads. To-day he could begin a friendship with the Cave Men and carry it through to an alliance with the Mound-builders.

He would make this an opportunity to serve the Biggest Chief with diplomacy. The white one *was* a good spirit come to guide him through the dangers of an unsettled tribe.

He turned to the Albino, "Keep your people in this place. Do not let them join with wandering tribes and go away. If they will stay here all the time, the Biggest Chief, who is the ruler of this land, will send you squash and sunflower seeds, and corn and beans to plant in these fertile valleys. There are mussels enough to feed you until the crops grow. Let the antlered one lead the hunt through the creeks for mussels."

The Albino wanted to live in this new cave. He was delighted with the plan. Gratitude showed in

every line of his face. To this friend who had imprisoned fire for him, he promised his tribe's loyalty to the Capital at Chillicothe.

The Swallow was on tiptoe to run along with his Cincinnati message and with the added important news from Seven Caves.

He paused in the very act of flight to say, "Hoard all the pearls you find. Pearls are a necessity. But if you want to do so, you may send that pink pearl, by me, to the Biggest Chief. By it he will know that you mean to be true to his leadership."

For the first time the Albino became interested in the discovery of pearls. If the Swallow liked pearls, then he, the Albino, would look after all the pearls the sorcerer found in the mussel shells. If a leader ought to have pearls, then the Albino would have pearls. He nodded. He smiled.

The Swallow stooped to examine the whelp's paws as he said, "When I go through Bainbridge, I will stop and send back to you a dozen gardeners with tools and seed. It is corn planting time now and the gardeners will show your people how to put your crops in these fertile bottom lands. From Bourneville and other places more men will come with other tools and more seeds."

"Strawberries are ripening on the hillsides. Red mulberries and white ones are beginning to drop," the Albino had noticed. He was delighted to live

in this new cave. To this running friend who had joined him in the dangerous bear hunt, the Albino promised his tribe's loyalty to the Capital at Chillicothe. He liked the idea of belonging to the splendid nation of Mound-builders, those people who wore clothes like the Swallow's and had knives for cutting hot meat.

The Swallow emptied his own secret pouch, "You may have these pearls of mine to pay for the seeds until you find more pearls of your own."

From the other pouch which the Swallow had given him for the pearls they had hunted together, the Albino took one beautiful gem, the largest and most luminous one. It was the most glorious pearl the Swallow had ever seen. The Albino made the gracious gesture of a radiant spirit, "The Cave Dweller promises loyalty with this pearl. Give it in my name to our Chillicothe's Biggest Chief. I beg him to accept the tribe of the Cave Dweller."

IV

BIGGEST CHIEF

FROM the tallest mound on the Chillicothe walls, the lookout caught a glimpse of a darting swallow's wing tip. Then over the crest of the western hill came a boy at a flying pace, a long distance runner.

Word passed from guard to guard and on down to the gates. It was followed by the surprising fact, "A dog runs with him."

It was early. Not much was going on, so the news spread. A runner was a telegram, a radio, a wireless, a telephone and a morning paper all in one.

A running dog was a sensation. Dogs were numerous. Every family had one. They were the Mound-builders' only domestic animals. But they never ran. They seldom walked. So lazy were they that the only thing they did willingly was to sleep in the sunshine.

The gatekeepers welcomed the Swallow but they looked askance at the whelp. It was now growing tall and rangy and becoming neither pretty nor good. Its tail never wagged. With its ears cocked and its

wicked fangs showing, its green eyes followed the gatekeepers' every motion. But when its master said, "Down! Whelp! Down!" it went flat at once.

As though he were showing a passport, the Swallow unfolded a shell-embroidered bit of doeskin no bigger than his hand. In the skin lay a carved stone pipe of a wild goose pattern.

Now the burliest gateman would always bow down to the most wizened artist who could design a piece of sculpture. These Mound-builders all loved beauty. There were taste and skill in everything they did, whether it was the engineering of a huge fortress on a precipice or the tracing of an eagle's likeness on a child's small toy.

The gatekeepers knew by this bit of fine carving the Swallow carried that the bearer had come on a big errand. So they called a guard who took one look at the carved pipe and then he called another guard of a higher order, who in turn sent a special guard with word to the Biggest Chief, while he himself, with stiff-backed dignity, escorted the Swallow in person.

He walked with ceremony, holding up his copper mace of office and nodding his forelock which was copper-entwined with blue jay feathers. The Capital was used to his style of march. Nobody looked

at him. All eyes turned to the Swallow whose face was so gay that it stirred their curiosity.

And the whelp? Not for any High Copper Mace Bearer would a wolf cringe at heel. That whelp walked beside its master with its nose in the air, partly because it was of a wild free nature and partly because this Capital had odors of its own queer enough to open any whelp's nostrils.

Both runner and whelp had slept and breakfasted and dipped in the creek and except for that sprint over the hill and into the town under the eyes of a wall full of sentries, they were as fresh as this first June morning itself. Fully minded to notice everything, they followed their guide, all ready to catch any idea that might help them to find favor with the Biggest Chief.

The copper mace led them in a roundabout path. The Swallow knew this was because a stranger like himself must be inspected by guards, here and there, who pretended not to look at him as they stood on the street corners, but who watched him sharply out of the corners of their eyes.

The Swallow did not mind such examination. The same system was used in his father's fort. For these simple-minded Mound-builders sometimes let malice, envy and restlessness get the better of them and once in a while disloyalty would show itself in treachery,

assassination and barbarous deeds against the Chieftain in power.

In any fort, each newcomer was searched. Even the Swallow had just now left his sling and his flint knife at the gate.

He used his own eyes freely, trying not to stare openly at the wonders of the Capital.

Many mounds of many kinds were all about him. They were the foundations of all sorts of structures.

His home fort at Winchester was a shelter for a tribe of farmers, some of whom lived in it. Others had their wattled huts outside the walls. Cincinnati had more workshops than Winchester. Each workshop was a manufacturing plant with comfortable stone bowlders to sit on, bark roofs above and devices to help the carver, the rush-mat weaver, the cloth-maker, the potter, the mica-cutter, the flint-chipper and the dresser of skins.

But this central Mound-builders' Capital at Chillicothe, beside all such workshops, had within its walls sacred inclosures for religious ceremonies, large circular fields for national games.

Marts of trade, where articles were bought for pearls and shells and polished stones, instead of changing hands by country barter, were on every corner.

Along the lanes came people on their way to market. Strong men with tump-lines round their

foreheads were lugging baskets of mussels, very heavy. Half-grown boys, with thongs over their shoulders, each carried two baskets of water cress, very light.

Others balanced breakable loads, in jars, upon their heads, bluish wild duck eggs, speckled turkey eggs, small pigeon eggs, and round turtle eggs. Others, still, bore the game itself in braces, in covies; ducks, geese, turkeys, quail, rabbits, turtles and fish.

There were squawking and fluttering, biting and pecking, squirming and flopping. But no place did a rooster crow. That was one sound never heard. Not a hen cackled. Not a domestic fowl was in sight. A nice fat chicken had never been on these markets.

Not once did the Swallow meet the milkman's horse, the milkman's cart or the milkman himself. There was no such thing as a horse, no such thing as a wheeled cart, no such thing as a milkman. Comfortable cud-chewing bossies did not exist. Nobody but a baby ever tasted milk. Hickory nut butter was the only butter used.

The checkerberry rains and the huckleberry rains had been plentiful so the market folks told one another. They said nothing about berries being good with cream. As far as they were concerned, cream had never been for sale or for churning.

Business was going on beyond the markets. When

the Swallow saw a young fellow carrying under his arm a couple of pointed wooden stakes wound round with five to eight feet of thong, he knew that fellow was an architect. One stake would be hammered into the ground. Pulling the thong tight, the architect would walk around the center stake, marking a circle with the sharp point of the other stake, to make a working drawing for the foundation of a house. The building trades kept thousands of workers busy.

From very high mounds, sentries looked down on the Swallow. They fixed their fires to send a signal to other mounds. The Swallow read his name in bright lights across the sky. "A runner! A runner!" People in great circular inclosures, where games of discus and bouts of wrestling were going on, passed the word, "Now we will hear the latest from Cincinnati."

A noble mound, of splendid proportions, with palisades and a guarded stairway of mammoth clay steps, held its place in the center of the Mound Capital. It was easy to guess that whoever rested in the seat of power within its walls, which were an inclosure within the second inclosure of the city walls within the tremendous moat, could see the country round about for twenty-five miles in every direction, a magnificent panorama.

When he saw that he was expected, that the ruler

of all this splendor was waiting for him with every point double guarded, the Swallow's light heart sank down—down—down.

The Biggest Chief must have been watching for him before he came in sight cross country, one solitary Swallow in flight. If he really had been looking, it meant that some one had foretold the Swallow's coming, some one had brought news of his first errand. All his care and planning for the Cave Dwellers might come to naught.

Were there unfriendly people in this Capital, just as there were mean folks in his father's fort, folks who in mischief told groups of sneaking Nomads about weak spots in the fort, of sickness among its defenders, of food shortage, spreading every bit of ill luck as it came along, tattling of every messenger? What if his message had been stolen and aid given to the enemy?

The Nomad enemies were growing to be more and more powerful. The ramparts against them had to be made higher and stronger each year. The later Mound-builders had learned to strengthen the earthen walls of their forts with stones cleverly fitted to support one another without mortar. More and more of these defenses were building closer and closer together, so that each one could see the fire and smoke signals of the one on each side of it.

Each city knew that if it were to survive, it must help the other cities against the common foe. In the course of centuries there had come to be chains of these forts. In the north one series of defenses went from the Mississippi across the Wabash away over into New York. Another on the Ohio extended along the Ohio, Kentucky, Indiana and Illinois front for miles and miles into the west.

The makers of these fortified towns were sometimes jealous of one another and quarreled and fought, so that the horrors of civil war often added to the menace of the Nomads. The wise rulers used their fighting men for defense only.

The over-ambitious chieftains set their armies at a neighbor's fort, besieged it and took it, if they could, all for the barbaric love of strife and conflict. The Biggest Chief, ruler of all the towns, had been chosen by the people because he did not like to see the Mound-building men destroy themselves fighting one another. He declared over and over again that they would soon need all their spearsmen to repel the Nomads.

The Swallow wondered whether the Biggest Chief might have been listening to talebearers, might think he was a spy, might take the whelp from him.

Sure enough, at the last inner gate, a stout door, but now ajar, two guards shook their heads at the

THE BIGGEST CHIEF RUSHED TO THE BATTLE FRONT.

whelp, who went "Down," at the Swallow's command and stayed outside the door.

The Swallow, himself, blithe and young in his worn moccasins, his finely wrought loin cloth, with his wing tips at an angle which he had carefully fixed at the mirror of a brook, walked into the council room and stood before the Great Grand Ruler of the Middle West, the Biggest Chief.

This famous chieftain was young, hardly more than a boy, just entering his twenties. He was born to this high estate and carefully trained for it. Only a year ago, during a terrific hand-to-hand combat with six Nomads who had slain his father in battle, he had destroyed them without help, and by that superhuman act, had turned a near-defeat by the Nomads into a victory for the Mound-men.

At once the people had shouted for him to take his father's place. On their demand he had climbed the Ruler's Mound with his father's death already avenged. His worn copper armor, dented and cut in a hundred places, had served as a coronation robe and he was acclaimed within a few minutes to be the Biggest Chief of them all.

During the tumult which followed this ceremony, he had gone down through a secret passage under the chair of state, while his guardsmen covered his absence. In a very short time, he came back bathed, groomed, perfumed with sweet fern and

dressed in a marvelous robe all made of pearls. By the hand he led the daughter of the Chieftain of Newark, city of wealth and grandeur.

The bride's robe of pearls was as gorgeous as the groom's. Nothing like them had ever been seen. All eyes were dazzled.

An official in robes of state, enriched with trimmings of mica in scroll patterns, followed them and stood with them at the top of the mound when the guards fell back to show the people this carefully planned surprise. And the whole vast concourse wept with excitement and joy, as they stood witnesses to the most splendid wedding known to that nation.

The Swallow was thinking of these much repeated stories as he came into his Biggest Chieftain's presence. Now he saw the famous ruler with his own eyes, noted every detail of the court.

Nothing could be more barbaric than the state and pomp of the ruler. On a stone throne-shaped chair he sat at ease.

His young face was plain of feature, haughty in expression, with brave eyes and a sensitive mouth. He read the Swallow at one glance and knew the blithe runner for the aristocrat that he was and for the good ally he might become.

The Swallow thought the Biggest Chief deserved his fame. He looked the part. Two long braids

hung over his shoulders and across his chest like a decoration, black as crow's wings. The one feather in his hair was from a scarlet tanager. His scarlet loin cloth was without ornament and so were his scarlet moccasins.

A cockatoo from North Carolina, part scarlet, in leash, perched on the chair's back. On the floor, not forty feet away, crouched the largest beast of prey, a great cat, the panther. It, too, was in leash, for it wore a harness of twisted scarlet ropes. Four brawny barefooted keepers in green loin cloths, each holding the end of a scarlet rope, strained to four points of the compass, keeping the ropes taut, so that the panther was helpless as though he were in a trap.

The Biggest Chief's manner was simple. He nodded for the Swallow to tell his news.

"My father, Chief of the tribes at Winchester, sends you the season's greetings." From his loin cloth, the Swallow deftly brought out a polished mussel shell. In it was a bit of wet moss. The moss cradled a wild rose bud, the first of the Rose Moon.

As the Swallow held the shell in his warm hand, the bud began to unfold and as he laid the shell in the hand of the Biggest Chief, the rose slowly opened before his delighted gaze. So fresh, so fragile, so fragrant, it stood out by contrast to that

cold stone room, a most unusual gift from one warrior to another warrior. The haughty ruler cupped the shell in his left hand and his whole face changed to something kind and gentle.

"The city of Cincinnati sends greetings from its new Chieftain, acclaimed by the people to take the place of him who was drowned in the spring floods," and the Swallow presented the carved pipe.

The ruler took it and said, "Thank you," before he put it on the arm of the chair which had been hollowed out to receive such tributes. But the rose shell he still held in his hand as though he wished he were free to leave his fortress and wander like any other boy through dew laden lanes where roses clustered.

"The Seven Caves send you greetings. A large tribe of Cave Men"—here all the guards, at every point, stiffened in their places—"driven out from Meigs by the high waters, have come to live in the Seven Caves." Like a ripple in water, a quiver ran through the guards.

The home-loving Mound-builders wanted nothing better than safety in which to till their gardens in the bottomlands. Nomads liked to eat garden truck. But they would not sweat and toil to raise it. 'Twas easier to steal it. If the Nomads once showed the Cave Men how to raid a maize patch, if those dull creatures once tasted squash without

having to hoe and bug them, they would become allies of the Nomads who were too strong even now.

What was the use of planting gardens!

The guards, all free citizens, who took an intense interest in the affairs of the country, hung on the words of the Swallow as he continued, "The leader of the Cave Men sends this gift as a token of his tribe's allegiance to his Biggest Chief at Chillicothe."

All bent forward to look at the great jewel, the rosy translucent pearl as the ruler held out his palm for it. They watched it as it rolled about, a perfect and priceless sphere.

The Swallow, born to the outdoors, had instincts stronger than his will to please. The hair had been crawling on his neck. He was conscious of the panther. At the moment when the group around the Biggest Chief leaned forward toward the pearl, his glance shot to the panther. He saw two guards let go their ropes, trip the other two holders of ropes, who went down in a heap.

The panther snarled and sprang free with four ends of rope leash dangling. Shrieks rent the air. Every guard present went through the door nearest him.

The Biggest Chief, seated in the raised stone chair, had no chance to run. Here was evil in the heart of the Capital. Treachery to the ruler on the top of the Mound world!

The panther, long a prisoner, heavy with breakfast, confused by the morning glare in her eyes, hesitated, crouched with swinging tail and turned a vicious grin on that man in the chair.

The Swallow stood as in a nightmare. It seemed to him that he was hours in making up his mind about what he ought to do. He thought of a dozen things, thought them over slowly and carefully and finally, after a long, long time, possibly three seconds altogether, he decided how he had better act. After the three seconds' pause, which was like dragging hours to him, he began to whistle the thin piercing note which was his only power over his own wild pet, the wolf whelp.

The notes rose high and shrill, louder and faster, a very demon's tune.

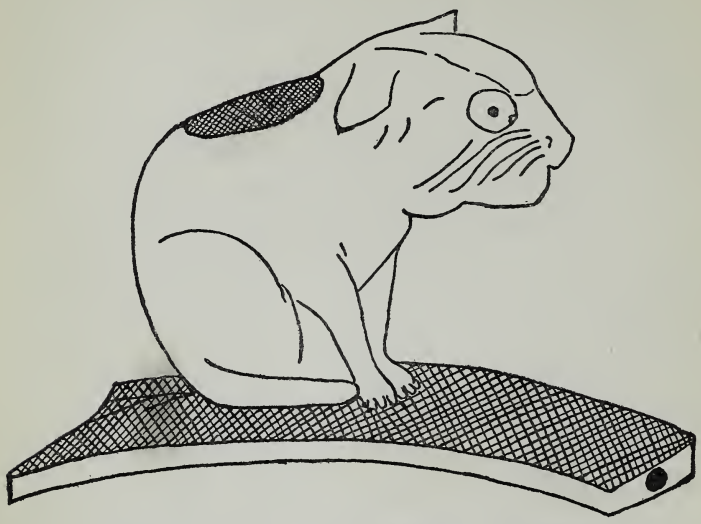
The cat's tail lay still. She shook her head. She was diverted—distressed. Rubbing her ears, she yowled.

Guards, recovering their wits, rushed back, ready to kill the panther with spears. But the Biggest Chief, who had not risen or dropped the pearl or crushed the rose, nodded for the barefooted guards to pick up the ropes again.

The panther did not pounce. She blinked and shook her head again and mewed. Like any tame old tabby they dragged her out.

The Swallow's weird notes ceased but not before

a dozen other guards, peeping in from safe high places on the walls, saw the whelp spring over and away from the doorkeepers and launch itself toward a spot at its master's feet.



TOBACCO PIPE BOWLS WERE CARVED TO LOOK LIKE CATS.

The Swallow had magic power over beasts! So said they all.

The Biggest Chief dismissed the guards now coming in to take their places again. Every one of the four who had held the scarlet ropes would lose his head by the law of the stone ax within the hour.

The Biggest Chief came down from the dais.

The Swallow went forward to meet him. Each touched the other's shoulder with his right hand like two friends meeting on equal terms, this young ruler of the Mound country and the younger runner who wanted to be like him.

"What did you come to tell me?" asked the ruler straightway. The Swallow answered, "The Cave Men are very many and easily led. I have hidden them in Seven Caves. They have found numerous beds of mussels but have never heard of the value of the pearls in them. Nomads do not know the whereabouts of these Cave Men and have not yet found the pearls."

The ruler's eyes grew very bright, "Go on with the story," he commanded. The Swallow confessed, "Because that was in the Moon of the Sprouting Leaves, the May Moon, I sent from several villages near there, weight carrying and gayly dressed runners, with seed corn to the Cave Men and with orders to stay until the crop was in. Their conjurer had to be taught how to bless the fields."

The Biggest Chief smiled. "The time was short, the need great. Who paid for all this?" he demanded. Without waiting for an answer, he accused, "You have used your own pearls."

"No. Only a part of mine. I tried to teach the Cave Men's leader something of the buying power

of their pearl fisheries," was the Swallow's defense of his own kindness.

"Why did you do this?"

"In the hope of serving you and of making allies for you, the Great Grand Ruler of us all. My father, the friend of your father, has trained me for a diplomatic messenger. He has taught me to follow the courses of the sun, the moon, the stars and the beacons flashing from the tops of signal mounds, so that I may faithfully do your bidding along the shortest paths laid out from village to village among people difficult to understand and to organize." The Swallow was very earnest as he pleaded his case.

The Biggest Chief gave his full attention to this runner's words. "What regions do you know?" he asked.

"The towns on the White River, the Maumee and the Great Miami. The Wild Rice Men of the Kankakee marshes to the west have shown me the routes by which they can supply your armies through the mazes of the overflowed lands. Canoe water and portage paths are marked out."

"And then?"

"Southwest through the river towns, Cincinnati, Miami Fort, Lawrenceburg and on down to the Stone Fort I would be able to pick out the trails or the water channels. To the northwest and the nearer

north-northwest I can find my footing, also." The Swallow gazed at this young ruler, so full of care, and all his pride in himself turned into loyalty for his new friend.

He laid his forehead on the ground at the Biggest Chief's feet. The whelp went "Down" of its own accord. "The Nomads are creeping in hordes toward all our borders. Use me to warn and help and save the threatened Mound people, oh, Best and Most Powerful of our nation—the Biggest Chief!"

V

TRADER

THE whelp was so restless that it made the Swallow uneasy. It ran up the hill and sniffed the breeze, came back to paw the trail and to study it.

The Swallow fixed himself a nest for the night in the sweet blue grass where he could watch the fireflies. The whelp put a cold nose under him and tumbled him out.

"I take the hint," nodded the boy, "and am warned." He praised and petted the whelp. The half-tamed one did not care much about love, yet it did want to say there was something in the wind and it could not tell what that whiff of an unusual taint might mean.

So the Swallow climbed a buckeye which partly overhung the trail. There he bent and wove together some inner branches into a mat. This made the buckeye his tree house, snug for a night's rest.

Whatever the danger was he must make ready for it and stay near the trail which was his path of duty, to be followed when daylight came.

OWL HOOTS ARE VERY OLD INDIAN SIGNALS.

The whelp would not allow itself to be dragged into the tree nor would it lie among the roots. Instead, it went halfway up the steep bank beside the trail and hid under an alder bush which gave out its own odor of ripening fruit stronger than the wolf scent.

"Oh ho," laughed the Swallow, "you want me to smell of buckeye more than I do of boy. I'll crush some nuts and leaves. I've followed your wise notions more than once. We will make ourselves safe. Thank you, my whelp."

The July night was sultry and very still. Almost the only sound was the far away "Who—who—who," of an owl and an even farther "Who—who—who," like an answer.

Several times during the night when this bird call and its answer were repeated, the whelp would get up, go to the hilltop, come back, walk around and around the tree, until the Swallow called softly, "*Good* doggie! Good *doggie!*" Then it would drop back into the alder. The Swallow knew it would be sleeping with its head on its paws ready to spring, just as it would have been doing if it had never left the pack.

Before peep o' day, an owl's "Who—who—who," sounded not far from the Swallow's ear. The echoing answer came from close by. He was awake on the instant. His tree house rose above the second

terrace of the Scioto River. He could look down upon the main traveled path by which he had come from Chillicothe on his way to Portsmouth and see the place where one trail kept to the river's bank and the other branched off and went southeast to Portsmouth which was on a high plateau northeast of the river's mouth.

The whelp, under the alders at the side of the trail, must have heard the owl's call and its answer, must have noticed the Swallow's shorter, awakened breathing, must have caught, also, another murmur, so slight, that it was the merest ghost of a noise.

The Swallow waited for the whelp to stir. When that wise guardian was silent, the Swallow became cautious and kept still himself and waited with eyes and ears on the trail below.

That trail was dusky and dim.

In this zero hour it was not at all like the busy path of noontime travel. There was a tiny stir some place like a breeze through the branches. Perhaps something was coming. He watched. There was a flickering. Floating shadows or morning mists were passing. Gray half light and darkness mingled and changed like fog below him. He noticed an animal odor. A dark blur and then other blots rolled by as though many silent creatures were moving.

He strained his eyes and held his breath. The

dawn spread. In the misty hollow he could make out vague forms. Men! Many men! Men trotting without a shuffle, without speech. He stared. More and more men!

Suddenly the dawn struck them. The Swallow felt that he was still asleep and dreaming. Such fantastic shapes belonged to the halfway place between napping and waking. As these people went along like a parade under him, their faces and bodies looked striped—red and yellow. He blinked and blinked.

Hair stood up in great bunches on the tops of their heads. They were not people, they were shades; bogey men vomited by the black powers of night.

No—no! Each had on moccasins and a loin cloth. So they were real folks of some kind. The Swallow was learning that there was more than one sort of man creature.

A bow and arrow, a good solid bow and a flint tipped arrow, were slung over every man's shoulder. A tomahawk swung from every right hand, all polished and ready for use.

What tribe of men had deformed and hideous faces? These were uglier than the Cave Dwellers. The Swallow grew sick with the sight. The rosy dawn threw a red light, like blood, upon them. Blood—he closed his eyes—tried to think—not

blood—paint. Paint! That was it. Their faces and chests, their arms and legs, were daubed with paint.

The Swallow, wide awake now, big-eyed and breathless, knew exactly whom he was gazing down upon. These paint-smeared men, horrid and dangerous, were the wanderers, the thieving, murderous wanderers. Swelling in numbers, growing in boldness, more and more with every year, they threatened to overrun the towns of the Mound-builders.

Nomads! He was seeing them for the first time. Nomads!

Continuously, they harassed and attacked the outlying settlements. Every far town was fortifying against them. The bigger towns and the Capital were so well defended that they were seldom besieged. Large forts were thought to be safe and offered shelter to any small town people who felt afraid.

Yet here were Nomads on a principal highway.

Wild fancies raced through the Swallow's brain. What if these Nomads, passing in hundreds and hundreds, were on their march to join the dozens and dozens of Cave Dwellers? What if they were planning an attack on Portsmouth?

Portsmouth was, perhaps, the most spread out of any of the Hopewell earthworks. It covered more ground than other cities of this Ohio nationality.

Both north and south of the Big River, it was built on a stupendous scale, having something like twenty miles of earthen embankments.

The Swallow was near Portsmouth now. He trembled to think of what might happen to it. He grew dizzy watching the steady stream of men below him. If he stared at them too long, they would feel his gaze, look up and discover him. He shut his eyes.

This was an army, a horde, a mob, an attacking enemy. Such men could swarm over stockaded walls, could bear down fortified towns and armed defenders by sheer force of numbers, by surprise attack, by ferocious energy. One who has seen an invading army can never forget that ruthless, merciless march of myriads, can never again feel sure of his own life or of his town's or his country's endurance. No wonder Mound-builders went armed!

The passing of all these enemies could be felt by the Swallow. Their rapid, almost silent motion stirred the air. It grew lighter through his eyelids. He raised one lid, took another look. If possible, all seemed more frightful than before.

If they went on toward Portsmouth, if they invaded that richest of all mound cities, what then should he do?

Now the light was higher. He could see the trail plainly. At the command, "Who—who—who,"

given with a change of accent, the swaying bodies went straight along the river road. Not one turned into the Portsmouth path.

A sunbeam shot up. Day had come. No figures showed on the ground below him. All had vanished. And the Swallow was as stiff and cold as though he had come through a sleet storm. The whelp stood at the foot of the tree, red-eyed and drooping. For one moment the Swallow felt like a very little boy. He hugged the whelp in a spasm of shivers and tears. But he was a runner and a runner must keep going. The whelp begged to get into motion.

There was no stopping for breakfast or bath. They sprang into the trail for Portsmouth. It was only after many miles at his swiftest, that the Swallow dared to stop to drink, to eat parched corn, to take a dip in the creek and to let the whelp forage.

His thoughts had been plunging here and there like his winged feet. But now, forcing himself to lie prone under a fallen tree, he went over the things that he must do. They were simple enough. Run into Portsmouth, deliver his message from Chillicothe and add this fact of the Nomads passing.

He wanted to be of use to his rulers, but he did hate to tell bad news. The bearers of evil tidings were sometimes treated roughly, sometimes tomahawked. He thought over the words he might use

and how best to say what must be said. He told the whelp.

They started out again. As they neared the brink of a hill, he saw that he must dip into a deep, long valley. The Thunder Bird was spreading its wings to shade that valley. The whelp whimpered and refused to go on. Without waiting to find out what was the matter now, the Swallow grabbed the whelp by the scruff of its neck and yanked it into a water-worn crevice, behind some sunflower clumps, below the brink and above the valley, hanging on a shelf hidden from everything but bank swifts.

With a patter came the shower. "That will wash away our footprints," whispered the Swallow to the cowering whelp. With the swish-swish of the rain came the slush-slush of light feet in the rivulet made by the water running down the trail. These feet were wicked and alien, coming from Portsmouth way.

Seen in the dark of the canyon and under the clouds, the Nomads were magnified into giants of ogres. Not so many this time. For five months the Thunder Bird had drenched the country. The Swallow had grown more than tired of it. But now he was grateful to that dripping fowl who had covered his retreat.

The Nomads turned into a pathless gully, one behind another at double quick. They bore no loot

and were not marked with battle. When the clouds broke apart they were gone as though they were some of the Thunder Bird's shadow. Coming from the southeast, they had angled to the southwest. This was curious.

The Swallow's wits were at a loss. He had to trust the instincts of the whelp and the whelp wanted to go on.

He ran on with light feet and a heavy heart. Since he had started on this terrible journey, he had changed in mind and body. His resolve had taken a stronger turn; his muscles had hardened. The homely brute of a whelp beside him, loped along as though fully grown. Understanding chums, now, they had pitted themselves against the enemies of their race. Together they would struggle toward whatever end was coming.

No plans were made to enter Portsmouth with a flourish of swallow's wing tips, no gay smile to show his perfect teeth, no elfin lifting of his narrow brows above his sparkling eyes, no clever tricks to prove the whelp's power over common dogs.

So that a worn and muddy runner, pale from the strain of two grewsome adventures and a gaunt and solemn whelp were borne by guards into the presence of that Trader who was Chieftain of Portsmouth.

This was a serious Portsmouth and a stern Trader. Here was no throne, no pets of bird or

beast, no color and no state. In the middle of a clay-floored, earth-walled square stood the ruler of this vast, rich city, dictator of his fertile village sites in Kentucky and Ohio which bordered on the Big River, leading merchant between the Rockies and the Alleghenies, between the Gulf and the Great Lakes, overlord of all who bought and sold, richer than any other man could ever hope to be.

THE TRADER CLUTCHED HIS TOMAHAWK PIPE.

The Trader was middle-aged and severe of face. Sandals, a loin cloth and a headdress to protect him from the July noon sun were all he wore. In his hand was a pipe of ceremony, a tomahawk pipe which upon occasion could be used as a weapon.

No Indians of any sort, not even Mound-builders, smoked as white men do for the personal pleasure of the moment. Smoking was a ceremony with them. Sometimes it was a sacred rite.

That the drawing of a man's invisible breath through a pipe could create the delicate smoke it blew out was a mystery that gave all Indians a touch of awe. Wise men said it was thus a soul was set free. The tiny

ring of smoke floating away might be the newly born, visible life of some creature. It did seem possible. Many pipes were consecrated.

When an Indian smoked he did it slowly and with dignity and in the presence of his equals. For religion, for hospitality, for business, ceremonial pipes of different shapes were used.

Nomad Indian braves smoked the red war calumet in a ring around their council fires, to explain to one another why they must attack the Mound-builders who were spreading too many towns and gardens over good hunting grounds.

Mound-builders smoked the white calumet of peace inside their earthwork forts, trying to decide upon the best means to defend their homes and their crops. They must eat and they must sleep but the Nomads made it hard for them to do either.

Some Mound-builder towns were big, some little, some rich, some poor. Feuds between the towns and squabbles among their chieftains added to the worries of the pipe users who could not always smoke their way out to sane political action.

A Mound-builder business man did not sign contracts or endorse checks. He smoked with his customers instead. Debts were paid with pearls or engraved and polished disks of precious mica, fine stones and copper. Mostly he bartered and sealed his word of honor with his tobacco.

So the Trader, to show he was ready for business, carried his pipe in his hand. That it was a tomahawk pipe proved that he was ready to enforce his ideas should any customer be too hard to handle. This tomahawk pipe, like many other pipes, had its owner's portrait carved upon it. The portrait was carefully done. It looked as much like the Trader as he looked like himself.

Of the pipe's hard and frosty expression, he was very proud, and often gazed at this effigy of himself and stiffened his features whenever he felt tempted to be easy or gay.

It was this sour face that made the Swallow hesitate. But one glance at the Swallow and the Trader forgot all about himself. So the two stared at one another almost as naked in soul as they were in body.

Without waiting the runner gave the last part of his news first, "I have seen Nomads!" and told when and where.

The Trader jerked like a newly charged battery and snapped into action. "Let me see your feet," he demanded and stuffing the pipe into his loin cloth, he set one hand on the Swallow's arm and with the other pulled off both moccasins, running sensitive fingers over every joint and muscle. "You are more weary in mind than in sinews," he decided. He laid

an ear like a physician's against the athletic heart thumping behind the Swallow's lean ribs.

"Can you cut through and run down the two miles of the covered way to the river? There is a break in the stockade across the Ohio. Give the Nomad alarm to the signal man on this side." His strong face was as warm and kind as any father's. "To save us all," he said.

The whelp gave one sad yelp but turned to follow the two. At a lively trot, the Trader led them through passages and labyrinths, a maze of opening-and-shutting-stout-doors. In less than ten minutes, the Swallow was hurtling over the cobbles of the covered way that led to the signal tower at its end. The alarm must be given from there—he could not understand why—and not one of the sentries he passed knew, "Nomads are coming!"

Two long, long, endless miles, with no view to break the sameness. The earthen walls were about eight feet high and one hundred feet apart, running parallel in a long and monotonous cobbled path. At last he came to the end of this corridor and climbed the steps to its signal tower. The weathered old signal man stooped and gave him a hand up the last steps. He gasped, "Nomads are coming!"

The signal man flashed it by smoke puffs. There was no answering fire. "What is the matter?" wondered the Swallow.

He looked out across the water.

All rivers then were wider and deeper. Their flood was always above the lowest terrace and came up to the second terrace. At the end of the covered way, ferries of canoes and pirogues could carry folks across the river to the opening of another covered way on the opposite bank.

The fortress there was a square of fifteen acres with a wing of parallel walls extending out to a great distance on each side, so that the whole vast structure was nearly a mile long with its central square fifty feet high and extra heavy. There were paths on the tops of these walls for sentries to patrol and pass. But to the Swallow the whole place looked deserted.

The last storm must have hit it hard, for part of the main stockade above the river gate was loosened and tipping inward. All along the front, many logs were livid white, as though splintered by lightning. Worst of all, a wide gash, a washout, ran down the steep wall. This was unusual, for all such walls were built to stand the storms of centuries. They were meant to shed water, yet this one was showing poor construction.

No one answered the smoke signal and only three men—all too few—could be seen working in a panic to repair the stockade. And this grim fortress with one entrance was believed to be—secretly, of course

—the treasure house of the wealthiest man in the country!

"That place got our message but it never answers," there was a note so strange in the signal man's voice that the Swallow grew cold.

"Nomads will not attack in the daytime. They are afraid of us," the signal man went on. "They will not attack at night. They are afraid of the spirits hiding in the trees, whispering—whispering—whispering, and of the devils squirming in the grass, hissing—hissing—hissing." His face showed that he, too, was in fear of such invisible things. "At twilight or in dawn the Nomads will come."

"Be sure to wake me," murmured the exhausted Swallow eating and drinking what all watchtowers provided for runners, as he fell asleep on a mat of rushes in the corner. The whelp finished the Swallow's meal of corn bread and blackberries before it got its own supper of prowling squirrels and curled up with both eyes shut for the first time in twenty-four hours.

In what seemed about two minutes, the whelp touched the Swallow and he jumped up. It was dark but he knew by the smell of the river that it must be near dawn again. He had slept for hours and hours.

Outlined against the sky, he could see the figure of the Trader, as motionless and as silent as a

stockade post. He was hidden from any person on the ground or across the river. The Swallow and the whelp went to his side behind the signal man.

Before there was light enough to make out any one object, there was a wavering among the shadows opposite. The "Who—who—who," signal came and was answered.

Twice before, the Swallow had heard this owl and had watched the shifting mists that half concealed the bodies of many warriors. These seemed to be swarming at the foundations of the fortress.

They found the washout!

They did not bother to murder the three guards, just threw them in the river. Scrambling up out of the darkness into the light, there seemed to be dozens of men, hundreds of them, thousands of them.

The foremost, all pushing at once, tipped the wind-blown section of the stockade farther into the fort, ran over it as though it were a drawbridge and made the big drop down into the central square. An endless surging mob followed these first ones.

Then the lightning-scarred posts were shoved inward. With yells of triumph, bunches of warriors slid down these and jumped into the treasure house.

Sunrise showed these invaders all painted and feathered. Boosting and pulling one another, the Nomads went up and over the wall. They took

possession of the Mound-builder fort, ready to capture that famous store of wealth untold.

Aghast, the Swallow turned his eyes from the fort to the Trader. That ruler's gaze upon his strongest earthwork held a cold grim triumph, impossible to understand and dreadful to see.

Terrible yells, awful screams, wild shouts, came over the walls and across the river. Something was going wrong with the victors. Not warned by these sounds of disaster, more and more savages poured into the breach. None came out.

With tight lips, drawn brows and hand on his tomahawk pipe, the Trader stood and looked and listened. He said, "My biggest source of income is that trap of the storm-broken stockade. Its inner walls are straight up and down, fifty feet high, without openings. It is a corral. There is no escape from such a prison. The Nomads have jailed themselves."

It was plain that the Swallow had never heard of anything like this corral, so the Trader went on. "I do not kill these Nomad raiders who come to surprise and murder my people. I catch them in the trap." He pointed toward the old, old, horseshoe-shaped altars set upon the hills far back of the town. "Nor do I offer them as human sacrifices at those altars as my forefathers did in the long ago wars when we were no more than savages ourselves. In

my town human sacrifice has gone and cannibalism is strictly forbidden. Such practices are bad for business. They drive away customers. I use the trap method for ridding myself of dangerous Nomads. It pays better."

The Swallow's eyebrows went up, his eyes were round. He opened his mouth but no words came. His face was a question mark. This ruthless disposal of the raiders had visibly shaken him.

The Trader answered as though the Swallow had spoken, "After the Nomad prisoners are subdued by hunger and thirst, they will be marched out under the lash, tied together in small groups. With two Mound-builder petty chiefs in command over them and one willing Nomad assistant, the youngest and brightest captives will be offered a chance to train as warriors in units of one hundred men each. Every unit will have its Nomad under-cover man or informer who will report all beginnings of mutiny in time for us to keep that particular hundred well in hand. Cornstalks on the north side of the Ohio River and cane poles on the south side are used in place of spears for the drilling, at first. When they are disciplined as well as savages ever can be disciplined, I hire them to rulers of forts in regiments of a thousand warriors. No wise ruler draws his gardeners or artisans or family men into the fight-

ing lines until it is a desperate necessity, so I do an enormous trade in hirelings."

The Swallow made this guess, "The unruly Nomad prisoners are sold as common slaves?"

"The short-headed and dull-witted ones are grouped in herds of one hundred also. They have the two Mound-builder and one Nomad overseers and one savage telltale, much the same as the warriors do. They are the easier of the two kinds of captives to handle. I sell them outright to towns whose greatest need is for Nomads who can be made to build up earthworks to keep out more Nomads of their own sort."

"But where does the food for so many men come from?" cried the Swallow who had already learned that many hours of every person's life go to the never-ending task of feeding himself.

"In Kentucky I own big game drives which end in huge log corrals. Such places are kept full of buffalo and deer for meat. Wild rice by the canoe load floats down every stream to me," was the answer. "It is a matter of system."

"If they obey their drivers they are fed," reasoned the Swallow; "if they do not, they go back to prison and starve there."

"I have barbers who comb and braid the hair of every Nomad. Weavers make loin cloths for them, so these captives are uniformed like our own

men. Slaves also are dressed like Mound-builders. It helps in their subjection," said the Trader, explaining his methods.

The Swallow could understand that if a prisoner looked in every direction and saw nobody but men in Mound-builder costumes, he might feel that he himself was a very small foreign Nomad in a country of thickly populated and heavily armed Mound-builders and so give up all ideas of revolt.

"Of course, all men are about the same size and of much the same color and all look much alike when dressed in the same style," said the Trader who had no idea that on the other side of the world there were big white men and little brown ones, big black men and little yellow ones. But his knowledge was practical for his own continent. Red men were the sort of men he knew—red men were the only men.

"Nomads have thicker skulls and less brain than we have. Our heads are longer. We have more dignity of countenance now as tattooing goes out of fashion. A bracelet on the arm tells a man's station in life better than red, yellow and blue face markings. As long as we Mound-builders are the dominant race, we can raise the Nomad captives toward our level of culture. But," and here the Trader shook his head, "if they ever increase so much in numbers as to overpower us, we will be dragged down and absorbed—amalgamated—"

"The Biggest Chief is sure the Nomads are planning a general attack from all directions. My message is to ask you for more warriors, all you can possibly send him. He wants you to know that in each fortified town every citizen has his stone ax, his flint spear and his bow and arrows ready for instant use and he knows his place upon the walls," and the Swallow went on to outline the Biggest Chief's system. "Each man in the fields carries a stout knife and knows the shortest path to the fort gate in case of a sudden foray. They are the volunteers ready to defend their homes. Of all fighters, they are the most individual and desperate. Even the slaves in the trenches and upon the mounds know how to use their tools to cover their own retreat to the fort."

"Such plans for protection are familiar to me. Most of the slaves were trained by drivers that I furnished," the Trader said.

"From this trap?" queried the Swallow who was still cold and pale as he studied the corral which was so full of a terror which he could hear and feel but could not see.

The Trader gave a short jerk of his pipe, "Yes. And the Eagle chieftain of the Stone Fort, who believes in short, severe training, has a Schoolmaster for his boys. That Schoolmaster is a genius. I hire all my drill masters from him. He can make ten

thousand warriors while any other man is making a thousand."

"The Biggest Chief has been getting word that the Nomads are very active now. He thinks they are making ready for an attack on our center this year," faltered the Swallow, trying to give his message with a calm manner.

"He thinks it. I know it. You feel it," and the Trader added harshly, "I am showing you this horrible necessary trap so you can judge for yourself why he needs a runner who can realize what haste means."

A meadow lark rose, trilling so gladly that its song soared above the distant clamor of the trap and the Swallow stretched his arms as if he, too, were ready to take wing.

But the Trader went on, "Ten thousand warriors will be sent to Fort Ancient at once, another ten thousand are almost ready and a third ten thousand will be in training for him."

When the Swallow looked anxious as he considered what so many aliens in mass might do if they revolted, the Trader assured him, "We mix the different tribes so that talk is of no use—they can't understand one another. And the food supply which is both a wage and a bribe travels by secret paths. After weeks of the best feeding he has ever had in all his life, no savage would try to escape

from the savory supper fire to the unseasoned raw meat of the cold mountain passes."

"Will I find friends at the Stone Fort down river where I go next?"

At that the Trader bobbed his head, "A welcome, also. But I'm sorry you have orders for Prairie du Chien. It's too far. It won't pay. You have planned too long a run and put your strength of soul and body to an over-severe test. The Michigan farmers, if you live to get to them, will make the best of allies if your diplomacy is good."

"The Biggest Chief has given me pearls for my expenses."

The Trader became more alert than ever, "Give me the largest one. For it, I'll provide you with a perfect canoe to float you and your whelp to the Stone Fort."

The Swallow was astonished at this exorbitant charge. The Trader allowed no argument. "That is the regular war-time price," he declared. "Big business thrives on war, my son. Some victories are of benefit to the warrior, but more are for the profit of the moneyed man, the Trader!"

VI

SCHOOLMASTER

IN the Stone Fort at the mouth of Fourteen Mile Creek on the Ohio River was a stone schoolroom with a stony-hearted Schoolmaster teaching in it.

This Schoolmaster was very severe, partly because he was young and partly because his pupils too often tried to play hooky.

Four of his half-grown boys, a mischievous quartet, were giving him a bad start on a certain August morning when he had a special reason for wanting to make a good show to visitors.

He wore a figured loin cloth and an air of authority. He had copper earrings as big as spools of thread and of the same shape. His brows bristled. To his pupils who shook in their moccasins when he fixed his eyes upon them, he seemed old and wise.

Such a sharp monitor had he become, that he could tell what any class of boys were going to do before they had quite made up their own minds to do it.

To the quartet who sat at bowlders, like stone

desks, in front of him, the grim setting of his lips and the way he knotted up his loin cloth for free action, gave them an uneasy idea that in his thoughts he had already chased them, caught them by their hair, brought them back and held them up for ridicule before they had made all their plans for running away.

He could not punish them by flogging. Mound-builder boys were not afraid of flogging. Their pride defied pain but they hated jeering. Their vanity was hurt by laughter. Being made fun of was the one thing they could not endure. It was better to die than to look absurd.

When boys grew big enough to be unruly, they were sent to some kind of a tribal school where a master with a knotted club taught them what was what in gentlemanly behavior.

Boys in the same team with this quartet lived in a long house or boarding school, built of bark and skins, upon a mound. They had the kind of drills with spears and slings, with bows and arrows, with running and climbing, as was then the law.

Each day they spent hours at their desks chipping pieces of flint together, to shape and sharpen them like the pattern held up by the Schoolmaster. Learning to make spearheads and arrow points required practice.

Their janitor service was not good. For it is easy

to see, even now, beside some of these bowlder desks, bits of broken flint and lopsided knives lying on the ground in a clutter. These are the spots where some careless student has been tweaked on the ear by a cross master, made to throw the faulty work aside and to stick to the task of turning out a perfect weapon.

Big underground pits, like secret armories, always guarded, were filled with thousands and thousands of spears. Others were crowded with bows and arrows.

The chieftain of the Stone Fort demanded great care. Every stone ax must be exactly right. Preparedness was a big part of his life. All the men in the fort and everybody in the town among the fields at the foot of the headland had to help in plans for defense.

So while the quartet made stone arrowheads and set them on their shafts vertically to shoot between the ribs of hunted bison, they also made arrowheads to set horizontally. How smoothly such stone points could pierce between the ribs of human foes!

On this special day in the August Moon, the Green Corn Moon, the quartet was tired of making weapons, bored with studying the wireless messages of smoke signals, impatient with chanting slow temple mound services.

They wanted a vacation in the open, a clambake

with roasting ears. The Stone Fort's marvels were no treat to them.

It stands on a rocky headland three hundred feet high. Its sheer precipice drops to the Ohio River on one side, to Fourteen Mile Creek on the other. River and creek unite below it.

There are something like a dozen acres in the plateau on its top. Some of them covered secret passages and hiding places. Wherever there were weak places in the steep natural walls, the Mound-builders laid up clever stonework without mortar to strengthen them.

At the north toward the land there was one narrow path leading down to the villages on the plain where the cornfields and the gardens grew. This path was defended by guards with twelve-pound stone axes. Each guard wore a girdle of rattlesnake skin. The rattles themselves dangled in his bright green headfeathers. He had a ferocious grin and a keen stone dagger. Sometimes his heart was soft, sometimes it was like the Schoolmaster's.

Heavy log gates were across the top of the path. A few men could hold the path against many. A very, very old idea, so good that it cannot be bettered.

The quartet, four truants, drifted toward the gates and hid near them. One reason why they were

so vexed with life was because they were envious of the visiting Swallow.

This Swallow did not have to work or study. All he had to do was to go traveling from one town to another carrying some little message that did not weigh a thing. He knew all the famous rulers and got presents from them. He could see all sorts of interesting places. No staying at home for him, to practice this, that and the other in some dull fort.

He had floated down the Ohio all by himself in a fine canoe, with no one to worry him and with the biggest and best of dogs to mind him. And now he was standing, easily and gayly, talking to the Chieftain, telling him, most likely, what *he* had to do. And the Chieftain, quite anxiously, was asking the Swallow questions and hanging on his answers as if they were something vital.

Even the Schoolmaster couldn't scare him. Like chums the Swallow and the Schoolmaster went through the hidden passages together. They tested the bows and balanced the spears side by side.

The Swallow could do as he pleased and not be scolded. The spirit of rebellion raged in the quartet. If he, who was only a little older than they, could have fun all week long, why shouldn't others have a chance for a good time?

So the quartet decided to make a day of it and cut classes. This happened to be a soft-hearted hour

with the guards and they shut their eyes while the boys slipped through the gates.

They ran down hill. They were free.

Some boys from the villages joined them and they were having such a happy time that when the Swallow and his whelp came along they forgot all about their envy and asked him to join them in a beach frolic.

The Swallow had been running about making friends with the villagers. Like many lively people he had an intense admiration for artisans who could sit still for days at a time, working patiently with skillful fingers. Weavers, handling the warp and woof on their primitive looms, welcomed him because he knew the names of their patterns and knots.

THE SCHOOLMASTER DECLARED THERE WERE NO HAIRY MAMMOTHS.

He looked with interest at their in-and-out weaving, at two kinds of netting, at four sorts of twined weaving and at a new design which flowed like waves. And he told them how the cloth makers at Cincinnati were combining milkweed

fiber with blue feathers to produce an elegant effect.

Much talk centered about a tool which the Trader's runners were selling to the towns along the Ohio River. It was a mechanical device that would draw a perfect circle. Already the weavers were marking out such disks on their goods and having the pattern dyed red, yellow and blue. Copper armor, mica medallions, stone tools, leather shields, shell gorgets and bone maces were all being ornamented by that circle with its charming dot exactly in the middle.

Even this careless group of boys stopped when the Swallow did to look at a method, lately perfected, which produced results something like the work of a lathe. By it, bits of wood were turned in round shapes. It could make spool-shaped earrings. These earrings, covered with copper foil, were much in vogue. They gave style to any man's appearance.

The Schoolmaster wore them. He was a model of neat grooming and good taste in dress, with his dignified headgear and the big bow of his loin cloth tied in the back. But the quartet did not like to be reminded of the Schoolmaster, so they all raced away to the swimming hole.

When they were tired of that sport, they built a fire from embers left by a campfire group. And then they had a feast. Fresh-water clams from the creek and green corn from the fields made a hearty

meal. It was one of many and many such picnics, for the pile of shells, into which they tossed their empty ones, forms a kitchen midden, between the creek and the river, that is more than a mile long and nobody knows how deep.

When the bobwhites stopped calling toward sunset, they started home, joyously trotting in single file, toeing in and listening to the crickets, while they watched the flocks of blackbirds turn and wheel.

They had wandered farther than they had meant to do. August days are shorter than midsummer vacation days of June. Dusk settled, mysterious and dim. Any night had bugaboos. Great looping tree roots were not always the roots they looked to be. Two round bits of foxfire, close together in the wayside marsh, were not foxfire for they moved along as the boys did and stalked them through the gloom.

Glancing this way and that, the boys began to run.

Suddenly their leader stopped. His pointing finger shook. On a trail which crossed theirs were fresh tracks. Such tracks! Each footprint was as large as a stockade post hole and almost as deep. What manner of beast could leave a spoor like that?

These boys knew. Their knowledge turned them pale. For one moment they huddled together in

terror. Only one thing could be more dreadful than those tracks. That thing was the creature who made the tracks. The Swallow was scared. The whelp's instinct told it to put all possible distance between it and the trail of such a beast.

Another minute and all six were in full flight. Their thoughts were racing with their feet. Had they or had they not seen some blurred and terrible shape in the distance? Run—run—run! Without hesitation, the Swallow who had left the Stone Fort that morning all ready to start on a long journey to Michigan, decided to go back to the high rock again.

Almost inaccessible, it seemed to him that the Stone Fort was as safe as an eagle's aerie. The bold fierce chieftain on its top, his eye in the sun, was like an eagle, with sharp talons of spears and a beak of fire that tore his enemies to shreds. That lofty nest could not be robbed. No heavy animal could reach that peak. All its defenders were sure of its strength.

The Swallow trusted his own winged feet. He put his faith in the high rock.

The boys' hearts were beating heavily when the fort came in sight. Yelling to the guards, they scampered up the path. Bang! Bang! Bang! They hammered at the gates. In their odd language, made outlandish by their hoarse insistence, they

shrieked, "Mammoth! Mammoth! Hairy mammoth! Let us in! Let us in!"

The garrison pricked up its ears and began to hum. Watchmen on the highest mound, threw grass on their fire and fanned it to strong flames. Before the boys had grabbed the ropes of thongs and been hauled over the walls—for no one dared to open

SUCH MAMMOTHS LIVED THREE THOUSAND YEARS AGO.

the gates—red lights against the darkness were broadcasting to other forts, "Danger! Mammoth! Mammoth! Danger!"

While the boys were gasping out the tale of the tracks they had seen and the hulk they thought they had seen, the gates were being double-barred. Bowmen scaled the walls to the tops of the palisades. Spearsmen filled the courtyard. Axes were ready.

What sort of mammoth was coming? All mam-

moths were bad. Some were worse than others. Five decades before this, one of the forts on an Ohio River knob had been reached by a mammoth.

That one was a fat old she-mammoth, possibly two hundred years old and without tusks. The fight with her could never be forgotten by those who had part in it.

She had almost wrecked the fort. It had taken all their warriors' strength to drive her over the precipice into the river. Because they had not been able to get her bones or her hide, nobody believed a word of the story they told.

Indeed, so rare a creature had the mammoth become that it was supposed to be gone forever. "There is no such thing as a mammoth," the learned Schoolmaster had often told his pupils. "The mammoth and the mastodon are prehistoric and extinct."

Man and mammoth were both created in the same geological age of this strange old earth—the Age of Mammals. But the heydays of the two were thousands of years apart. The mammoth and the mastodon had almost passed away when man came into the western hemisphere. All their vast herds had vanished long previous to Swallow's time. But such creatures were long-lived and hidden away in remote places among the deep valleys of the knobs

were remnants of a few families of these elephant-like animals.

And once in a while, some Mound-builder hunter, who said he had spied a far-away mammoth, would carve a stone pipe in its likeness to astonish his friends and to prove his adventure.

If this were a rogue mammoth, what then? A whole fort full of soldiers could not dive down into secret passages. They had too much pride for that and too little room and too short a time.

How good was a mammoth's sense of smell? How much scent would five sweating boys and a wolf whelp leave? Would it trail them? No need to ask! Soon—too soon—the air was torn by a sound unlike all others. The loudest trumpet ever made could not echo such a blast.

The quartet clutched the Schoolmaster with shaking childish hands. They forgot that they were almost grown up—that they had called him an enemy. If he couldn't save them, nobody could—they clung to him—they loved him.

The ground rocked with fury. Something was coming that was too awful to look upon. The shock troops stood fast. They themselves did not know whether they were brave or whether they were paralyzed.

Mammoth! Mammoth! Here he was with a roar and a crash like the conflict of armies. The

log gates went down as though they had been a child's pen of corncobs. Tree trunks flew like splinters from the stockade. Two red eyes glared unafraid at the fighting torches of the shock troops. Arrows were mere straws against his vast bulk. His spiral tusks tossed aside the spearsmen.

Every one of the long coarse hairs which covered him stood out in a tempest all its own. He was a cyclone of rage. He had seen boys. Boys made him mad—mad—mad. All other things were as nothing to him. With a thunderous bellow, trampling soldiers and arms as he went, he charged the boys.

Five boys had but one impulse. In united action, they leaped to one side and went over broken gates as cats go over a wall.

The Swallow forgot his dignity, his responsibility, his whelp. Never had any runner gone as fast as this one did.

The mammoth turned like an earthquake and gave chase.

No boys can outrun a mammoth but in a sprint they can make good time. Down the path they had just come up the five sped headlong. The fort —breathless—astounded—all eyes—clung to the débris and watched the race.

The quarry flew toward the creek bottom. In it they touched the high places, those bunches of grass

that often rise above a morass. Any tussock was firm enough to hold a boy's weight for a few seconds before he jumped to the next. Their feet were as swift as wings. They kept moving.

The swamp was a safe enough place for boys.

For a mammoth who weighed tons it was treacherous.

If he had not lost his temper, he might have known he was too heavy for soft ground. He watched the boys instead of his step. With their two or three hundred years of life, mammoths, like elephants, grow experienced and wise. But this mammoth was young. He did not know that some ground is not good earth. It is quicksand. He bogged. Down—down—down—he went. There he still is.

The boys ran on and on until they dropped for lack of breath. These four truants dared not return to the Stone Fort. The Schoolmaster would laugh at them, first for running away from school, then for being scared and running back again, and worst of all for running the third time without trying to help in the fort's defense.

The Swallow was much embarrassed over his part in this escapade of the mammoth. He apologized to the whelp when that wise one appeared several hours after the trouble was over, looking sheepish.

It was better not to discuss this misadventure

with the other boys. He did not quite like the four and was just a little ashamed of being in their company. Whistling the whelp to heel, he made up his mind to wave an abrupt "Good-by" to the quartet and to be gone on his errand to the Wisconsin Hopewell town of Prairie du Chien at a pace the others could not follow unless they were pursued by something.

The Swallow, all ready to crouch in the swift runner's first position to take off, shot one last glance at the smallest boy who was the oldest of the four and was amused to notice that this little one had a voice of manly bass. The biggest boy's tones were sometimes high and sometimes low. The others were at the vocal stage where every word they spoke cracked twice. The speech of all of them was primitive but its meaning was clear. Like a mixed chorus they intoned, "For us, school is out. Never again will we be seen by that martinet, the Schoolmaster."

VII

GIANT

THE Swallow in his flight knew that the truant quartet, those four boys left behind, were following him with their thoughts, even now, and would soon put their feet on the trail after him. Because they were full of curiosity and did not know what else to do, they wanted to find out more about his affairs.

Envy ruled them. As plainly as though he were still standing beside them, the Swallow, in his imagination, could see their faces crisscrossed with scowls and almost hear their words as they complained, "We gave him a clambake. We showed him a mammoth. What has he done for us? Nothing!"

And then—the Swallow was not pleased when he considered this—they would keep on fretting, "He has to stop at every town and talk, talk, talk, to its chieftain. Let us run and catch up with him, make him think he ought to do something for us."

The Swallow knew where he was going and why. The path that he must follow slanted across Indiana

and Illinois and Wisconsin to the Mississippi River. It was one of many trails that radiated like the spokes of a wheel from Chillicothe. From the Capital of the Mound-builders to the last outpost of their Hopewell culture at Prairie du Chien was a long, long, long run.

In towns not too far from the Capital at Chillicothe where the Biggest Chief was well known and beloved, folks would be glad to see his messenger. Big-eyed, they would stare at the whelp and toss bones to it while they crowded round its master calling, "Has anything happened? What's the news?"

The ruler of any of these forts might say to the Swallow, "May little birds whisper sweet words in your ear, my son." He would listen to what the Swallow had to say, sometimes in secret. Then he would wave his hand at the cooks and command, "Give this man a good supper!"

As he ran the Swallow thought about the quartet. The next evening while he was eating with a ruler of a tiny village and making plans for defending the fields and gardens lying round it, he was uncomfortable over the idea that the truants were probably not having any meal. He fancied them wandering without a notion of where they were going except that they wanted to get away from the Schoolmaster, the farther the better. He was half sorry for them and half disgusted with them, afraid

that as they fussed over prospects they would fare forth on the line of least resistance, taking the wider paths made by buffalo and drifting west of north.

Thus through aimlessness they might happen to choose the same road that the Biggest Chief had instructed him to take.

The speedy Swallow carried almost no weight. His knife and his sling and a pouch of corn with half a dozen tiny bags of pearls were all that his loin cloth could carry in its slits of pockets.

It was a wise thing to show only a few pearls at a time. The pearls were money to use in buying whatever a village had to sell. In case the town was not interested in him as a messenger, he could make friends through trading.

He expected to receive one meal every two or three days from some chieftain who owed allegiance to Chillicothe. For the rest, August was the best month in the year to pick up a living through the Middle West. Fresh corn and wild plums were plentiful. Last year's walnuts, butternuts and hickory nuts could often be found in good condition. Eggs were nourishing if he did not mind an occasional surprise. If there was no bear in the patch, huckleberries were delicious. Once in a while he tried early haws.

The whelp was an industrious hunter and fed itself. Sometimes it brought in a ruffed grouse or

a ground squirrel to its master's cooking spit at night. At twilight, as he broiled these morsels in the open, sitting cozily beside the whelp after a hard day's run, the Swallow was provoked with himself for letting his sympathies stray to the quartet. Those truants carried no whirling swastikas in their pouches. They could not build a fire. No hunting whelp was friendly to them. No chieftain was looking for them.

Of course, when three or four lean days followed one another they could stop with the guards at a village gate. Jobs to work in the fields might be given them. Meat and acorns roasted in hot ashes would be the wages paid. But such gardening was apt to be tiresome. With crooked sticks for plows, mussel shells for shovels and flint knives for green corn cutting, the back of a laborer soon wearied. For such aches, moving along to some other town was the cure.

If the Swallow kept on a straight course toward Prairie du Chien he could not possibly be overtaken by the truants. But every once in a while there was sure to be some chieftain who was full of his own importance and who could not believe that any frowsy foe like a Nomad tribe might conquer *him*.

With such a one the Swallow's smiling diplomacy or his passionate warnings hadn't the least effect.

"No stranger can tell *me* what to do!" And the chief stood on his dignity.

Then the Swallow would have to run far to one side or the other from the main trail, find the nearest neighboring fort and try to explain to its ruler all the plans for the Hopewell National Confederacy. The political formula for a union was simple: "All for one—one for all."

Because of these side excursions and the time they took, the Swallow knew that if the truants were really learning to run they must finally catch up with him. Hoping to get a meal some place, without having to work for it, they would fasten themselves to the Swallow whose lively headdress and guardian wolf left a spice of romance in every town.

Day after day he was now going easily as the country flattened out into smooth prairie, so that he could cover astonishing distances. It was fun to trot through the summer land, listening to the locusts and nodding to the black-eyed Susans all in bloom. Clumps of purple ironweed and fields of sunflowers, carpets of flox and acres of lace plant were a joy to his eyes.

Thus he cut across Indiana and Illinois and came to Wisconsin. Something like five hundred miles on foot!

A new country spread before him. Flat meadows changed to rolling ones. Woodlands appeared along

rivers and around lakes. Fortified towns grew smaller and were farther apart. Not so many gardens were to be seen but more hunting parties went past.

People lived in skin tents instead of wattled houses. They had few mound altars and almost no earthen walls about their tepees.

They spoke in voices, kind enough, perhaps, but so much crisper and sharper with every mile farther north, that it was harder and harder for the Swallow's more southern ears to catch their meaning.

These folks were not afraid of Nomads. If the Nomads came the hunters could fold up their tents, take to the woods and hide in the thickets. Nothing much in the way of crops belonged to them. Their storage pits were safely hidden. They had nothing to lose. Why should they go and fight for somebody else?

They could not understand half the Swallow said and did not bother to try. He was not their kind of man. He received scant attention and was never invited for dinner. Without the whelp's daily catch he might have gone hungry through this region. His pearls did not buy much. Most traffic was in elk and bear teeth, big currency.

He was thankful to be nearing Prairie du Chien, where he would come across Hopewell people again.

No matter how anxious he grew over the outcome

of his journey, he could not help viewing this far country with the keen eyes of a traveler in a foreign land. Prairie du Chien was famous as a handsome and prosperous city, with skilled artisans, weavers and potters, workers in copper and flint.

Specially it was the home of a group of creative

BIG STONES WERE LAID TO MAKE A TURTLE TOTEM.

artists who were sculptors. They wrought in clay and loam and sod. All through these valleys they built huge mounds, some in true and others in fantastic shapes. Colossal figures of animals and birds, of men and reptiles, in low relief and half relief, were set upon more than three thousand hills and destined to last more than three thousand years, so

strong were their outlines and so clever their modeling.

Nowhere else in all the world can such monuments be seen.

As he passed them, the Swallow examined, with quaint surprise, figures of flying swallows, measuring as much as two hundred and fifty feet from wing tip to wing tip. He saw, too, 'coons, turtles, bear and beaver very much larger than life. Each effigy upon its hill was the totem or sign of the tribe living in the valley below. If the Swallow stopped near a tepee of the tribe, he saw the shape of the effigy mound outlined in paint on the skin door-flaps and caught the glimpse of the parts of a totem pole within the lodge bearing the same device.

Prairie du Chien and its outlying tribes were patrons of art. He began to be hopeful again.

On offering a brace of prairie hens to some garrulous old men near a tepee, one morning, he learned that the quartet had been in this very place and had gone on toward Prairie du Chien with a hunting party. The description of the truants was a mere sketch but there could be only one such group.

The Swallow hurried on. At dusk he came to a hamlet where the tepees were hardly more substantial than corn shocks. Here the hunt had camped.

Having grown cautious as his popularity waned through this distant land, the Swallow hesitated

to enter such a place. He circled it, then chose a clump of yarrow on a tiny knoll which gave a view of the campfire.

With the whelp he crawled a long way through the grass and together they lay flat in the yarrow. The plain looked as though nothing could be hidden on it, yet these two, without being seen themselves, could watch the men squatted around the blazing supper faggots.

At first the Swallow could not believe that the truants were among these wild-looking hunters. The changes in the four were great but he finally managed to pick them out from their half-savage friends.

They had started from the Stone Fort without baggage. So they had found it impossible to keep their hair combed and braided and neat. Each had bunched his untidy locks on top of his head. All their nicely woven straw sandals and loin cloths had worn out and been replaced with ragged wisps of cloth they had picked up.

Their nearly civilized Mound-builder habits were being forgotten. They were reverting to that Nomad type of the first canoe load of wanderers who had crossed the Bering Sea and discovered America. Part of these wanderers, as their tribes increased, had gradually become Mound-building town people while others were still Nomads.

The Swallow could see as he peered fixedly at them that the truants, educated in the Stone Fort, were backsliding from the settled type of folks to the tramping ones. Forgetting their duty to the Stone Fort they were taking up with any vagabonds they met.

Watching and pondering with his chin on his hands, the Swallow reviewed this run from the Stone Fort. So many of the chieftains hereabout had failed him that he began to speculate on whether these four bad boys could injure the cause of the Mound-builders in this region. He was not so sure of his welcome now at Prairie du Chien as he had been when he started.

"What are my chances for learning the exact state of patriotism in Prairie du Chien?" he asked the whelp. "I'll not go in person. I'll send a deputy." And then, coming to a quick decision, "Stepping down from the high estate of the Biggest Chief's confidential runner, to the lowest place of all, I'll be a beggar at the edge of camps, prowling at night in search of scraps, scraps of information. What is Prairie du Chien going to do when the Nomads cross the Father of Waters?"

It was now quite dark. The hunters slept with their feet toward the embers of the fire. The Swallow sat up, took the copper ribbon from his hair and folded it around his insignia, the blue-black wing

tips. He put this package into his empty corn pouch and laid it flat inside his loin cloth.

His short hair he clawed in elflocks over his brow and eyes and ears, rubbed dirt into his skin and over the upper part of his precious moccasins. Footgear was hard to get and needed extra care; but for this costume his running sandals must be made to look sloppy.

"And that's not all," he told the whelp, who sniffed and pawed and growled at him, "I'm going to have a complete disguise. The feathers we saved from that poor little cardinal we found this morning made me think of this plan. Follow me." He crawled back, circled the camp again and traded the feathers and some pearls to a sleepy old squaw for a dirty loin cloth and a twice torn blanket.

All that night he traveled in so queer a garb that the whelp was continually smelling at the plebeian blanket and snapping fleas from the wretched loin cloth. At dawn, the Swallow waited until the whelp was heavily fed, then commanding, "Down! Whelp! Down!" he left it in another yarrow bed to guard his sling until he came back.

He felt lost without the whelp and he did not know himself when he peeped into the mirror of a tiny lake. His unkempt hair hid his face, the blanket concealed his figure and a limp changed his whole manner. Without attracting any notice, he joined

one of the many groups of unlucky men who had somehow lost their hunting spirit under the new ruler of this big city of Prairie du Chien.

That idleness and poverty were increasing was the first news he heard.

For the people had lately taken a strange chieftain, the talk of the town, the wonder of the countryside. Wrapped in his blanket and hunched on the ground near the central playground and dancing ring and lost in the crowd made up of the scum of the whole northwest, the Swallow looked about to learn what he could of this much discussed new ruler.

Under his disguise, the seemingly dull-witted Swallow was all in a tingle. It was his first masquerade. His eyes, his ears, the very hairs upon his neck were quick to catch whatever was done or said or felt on this first day of his secret service.

The first thing he saw was the chieftain. A giant! Eight feet tall! No wonder the people buzzed!

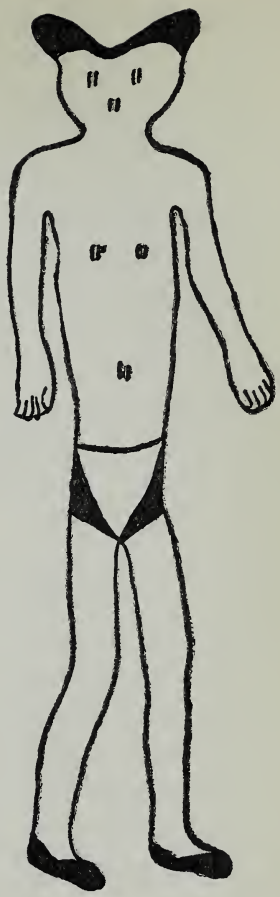
This Giant really was seven feet tall. He parted his hair in the middle and braided it in two tight braids above his eyes as no Mound-builder had ever done. Then he doubled each braid back on itself and stuck a thorn through it lengthwise to hold it stiff and straight. Behold! He then had two horns which leaned a little forward and outward, giving him a diabolical look and making him eight feet tall.

He had been a wandering soldier of fortune.

Height was his only asset, so he had used that height to win him high office in this newer country.

All Mound-building Indians loved theatrical effects. Often their chieftains were chosen for the show they made. The tribe was ruled by wise men. Their ideal for a figurehead was a lively young warrior who was bigger and braver, finer looking and more talked about than the chieftain of any neighboring tribe. He must act the part. A horned giant would stir up any town.

To the Swallow, who was not in a kind mood, it seemed as if the Giant's vanity had swelled to twice his size and that his soul had shrunk to half what it should be. He paraded back and forth. The audience was delighted with him. The old men sitting round a council fire on



THE GIANT WAS SEVEN FEET TALL WITHOUT HIS HORNS.

this autumn afternoon, admired him almost as much as he admired himself.

Toward this fire as to a court of justice came four guards dragging four prisoners who had been caught in a bear trap. The Swallow held tight to some tufts of grass where he sat to keep himself quiet when he saw those prisoners—the quartet.

He knew them in their rags but they did not see him in his. He was one of a group. They were captives set apart.

How frightened they were! Not one word of their frenzied pleadings for mercy could be understood by the council. Their accents were too foreign. But the Giant informed his elders that he could tell what they meant, as indeed he could, every word. And he added, to inflate his own value, "I, myself, the Giant, can speak all languages."

The Swallow grew tense as he listened to the Giant using the dialect of the Hopewell people as only a native of Ohio could speak it. The scared truants made one reckless promise on top of another of what they would do for the Giant if he would save them from the usual fate of poachers caught in a trap.

"Don't eat us!" they shrieked, "Don't eat us!" Wildly they chorused, "We'll build wonderful mounds for you" and "Super-extra spear-points we can chip for you" and "The newest drills are known

to us" and "Secret information about Chillicothe's Mound Capital."

The Giant pricked up the small and greedy ears below his horns and gave attention. The Swallow was so outraged that he stopped breathing.

The truants, struggling for their lives, declared that the famous Swallow, personal runner for the Biggest Chief, was an intimate friend of theirs and that he had traveled with them when they left the Stone Fort!

Like a red-hot kettle, the Swallow seethed, all ready to boil over. But beggars could not indulge in temper. He had to keep still and listen to this amazing talk.

The Giant must have thought that only the four could know what he said for he spoke freely. "My tribes want more mounds built, but I want more warriors trained. I'll spare your lives so you can do the drilling. I'm getting ready to take my best fighters and put myself at the head of those wild Nomad spearsmen coming across the Mississippi in the next moon. As commander of an immense army I'll go down into Ohio. I mean to conquer one or two or three or four of those cities." His expression was vicious. "Those people in Chillicothe, who knew me when I was a poor naked boy, must be made to look at me now dressed in a robe of iridescent passenger pigeon skins, all prismatic feathers, the

greatest of chieftains, the tallest and fiercest, the Giant!" His face grew smug again.

So quickly can coming events shape themselves, that the Swallow, choking with his heart in his throat, heard the Giant and the quartet enter into a conspiracy against the peace and dignity of their own nation of Mound-builders.

The truants said that the Mound-builders were afraid of the Nomads, which was a fact. When it was plain that the Giant liked such information, they also told him that the Mound towns were poorly defended, which was not in the least true. And they added, "A genius like the Giant, with an army drilled by us, can easily capture that stronghold, the splendid Fort Ancient, key to the Middle West. Then will the Giant be the supreme ruler of all people, both the Mound-builders and the Nomads."

Whereupon, that tall one swelling visibly, promised, "You four shall be my agents in this matter of getting any secret plans the Mound-builders have for special defense. The big attack on Fort Ancient has long been planned for the Dark Moon in December."

Glibly he explained to his staring elders that the four were artistic Mound-builders forced to travel like poor people lest some rival city should steal them while they were on their way to the celebrated Prairie du Chien and its peerless Giant! So the

elders, much pleased, hurried the quartet off to be dressed and fed according to the demands of their supposed high station.

The Swallow was a creature of flight. He loved freedom to move and to whistle. But here he had caged himself in a dirty blanket. He must not stir nor make a sound. Seldom had he been forced to so much outward calm.

The wings of his fancy beat silently against the bars of his disguise. How was he to stop the tongues of these foes almost within reach of his hands? He had never taken time to think about himself. Now he began to wonder if he were in any way responsible for the double-dealing of these traitors.

It seemed impossible—it was absurd—that the four truants who had been at first merely happy-go-lucky wanderers, had turned by degrees into liars. When danger to their own skins arose they had no fortitude. They had agreed to sacrifice their native country to save their own worthless lives.

Never before had the Swallow seen the downward path spread like a moccasin trail before him. How easy it had been for them to go the wrong way! He grew cold with terror as he thought, "Suppose I had run with them and had changed as they have changed?"

While he was looking straight into their faces he

had seen by the gleam in their eyes the exact second when the four had stepped across the line between courage and cowardice, between right and wrong. On this decision of theirs—it had taken less than a minute—might rest the safety of the Hopewell people.

The Swallow was appalled when he realized the extent of the mischief they might do.

They were pupils of the Stone Fort Schoolmaster, a group of his pupil-teachers and assistants. He was the best drill master and armorer in the nation. They must know all too much about the stores of spears and the caches of bows and arrows in every big town within running distance of the Stone Fort. And they would sell their knowledge to the Giant!

The Giant was not telling the truth when he said he expected to put himself at the head of the Nomads coming in the next moon. That idea had just popped into his mind and it seemed a fine notion to brag to the quartet. How childish for a Giant to puff himself up for four boys, how silly for them to believe such a yarn!

What foolish people!

Yet the Swallow was troubled. If the truants could show the Giant enough army maneuvers—and they easily might—to oppose the well-trained Mound-builder fighting men, if they could tell him where and how to capture arms and if the Giant

could exhibit these truants and their information as his own property, he might take a warrior's stand side by side with the chief Nomad and intrigue that one into an attack on Fort Ancient in the Dark Moon. To be sure he had only just that moment thought of it, but why not?

The Swallow's brain seemed to be whizzing round and round.

The quartet had started a war. Sometimes a careless boy with a flint spark in the prairie grass could set the whole state of Illinois on fire. How much worse the dastard work of the truants! Strife between Mound-builders and Nomads had long been brewing. In this hour it had begun. No one could stop it now.

The Swallow gnashed his teeth. The best person, the only person for him to talk with, the one person who could be made to understand, was the tribe's Medicine Man, its wisest member.

But alas, the Prairie du Chien Medicine Man, by the most tragic coincidence, had died suddenly, the very night before the traveling Giant from Ohio had appeared in the town. Somebody had strangled him. The Swallow suspected that the murder was done by a pair of tremendous hands guided by a small brain which wanted no just judge to sit upon the new chieftain's acts and motives. Prairie du

Chien's Medicine Man had to die before its Giant appeared to the rest of the people.

The crowd dispersed in the falling dusk. The Swallow was left a mere huddle in the dark. Mists thickened about him. One huge swaying shadow, like part of the night itself, took man's shape beside him, and poured out fearful words in the Hopewell language. Ranting and raving, quite beside himself and fancying that he was alone, this one was telling his ill luck to the prairie winds.

It had been a day of torture. Now added to every other woe, the Swallow, unseen, had to hear this voice of the shadow curse his brother, the Giant, call down maledictions on that traitor brother's head, beseech the spirits of darkness—the men-wolves—changelings—to send judgment on that Giant who had imprisoned his brother in a hollow mound tomb so he could not become a chieftain also.

In passionate hisses, he anathematized the black earth demons who had not allowed him to escape until it was now too late to divide his brother's office with him. He breathed such vengeance on his brother as made the very sky grow cold.

Before the Swallow's eyes, widened like a cat's in the dark, a huge figure—another Giant—straightened up and stalked away, reviling his brother and all the world. So the Giant Chieftain had a giant

brother and these two giants were enemies! One a mighty ruler and one a jailbird!

"Does every spy learn so much of evil? This disguise of mine, because it is a lie, seems to be drawing to itself all the wickedness of the world," and the Swallow sighed heavily. It was a comfort to him to feel the cold nose of the whelp under his chin in sympathy. *"Good* doggie—good *doggie!* I'm glad you tired of guarding the sling and have brought it to me." Exhausted, they both fell asleep. A boy's very own pet does not care whether its master is a chieftain or a beggar.

But very, very early, as is the habit of runners, they wakened. The Swallow mourned, "Prairie du Chien is lost to us. When the big game drive of to-day is under way, we will go with it, veer to the east and run back toward Michigan with the bad news. If we ever get home to Chillicothe, the Biggest Chief may not blame us for the action of Prairie du Chien. He called this journey a desperate chance —a forlorn hope. But the country lying in between is warned and we have learned the enemy's plans."

The whelp was not interested in politics, but it had to listen, for the Swallow wanted to tell his troubles. "If we can make allies of that Hopewell settlement near the rapids of the Grand River, we will give the good luck news first to the Biggest Chief and then our heads will not be separated from

our shoulders as so often happens to the bearers of evil tidings."

The whelp cocked its ears and paid attention.

In the Calumet region south of the Great Lake, the Swallow was sure to be met by some of the farmers from Michigan to whom he had sent word by every runner he saw on a cross trail as he came up into the northwestern lands. By this time all the Michigan coast would know that he needed a guide to Grand Rapids and some one was waiting for him even now.

"And so as we go from here the towns will become more and more friendly as the distance increases. These wind-tanned hunters, so dark and roughly clad, will give place to our own kind of people in quiet gardens who will be having hot suppers of stewed wild rice and honey in pretty gourds with shell spoons. And I promise you, no fleas, my whelp, no fleas!"

This was Prairie du Chien's day of a big game drive. The game drive was three things. It was a place, a place like a long, long lane, which terror-stricken deer had always chosen as the swiftest path to elude their pursuers. It was a feat, a feat of athletic strength on the part of the foot men against the endurance of the stag. It was a festival, a festival for the entertainment of many camps near which it passed while going pellmell. Every knoll

and vantage point was crowded with spectators who watched the drive because it was the most exciting show of the season.

The Swallow, not so gayly intent as the others, chose a place where the whelp could be hidden and where a beggar would not be seen too plainly.

The Giant was adorned with a necklace of bear canine teeth and bracelets of the same, copper beads and copper gorgets and a terrible copper knife. His spear had an immensely long flint point. Its handle was wrapped with scarlet feathers, and gave bright contrast to green loin cloth, blue moccasins, orange garters and a purplish countenance.

Risking a bold throw, the Giant called the hunt with a view halloo that was the same thing as the Nomad war cry. His men echoed it as something new and inspiring. No one objected. Thus the first point in the war was scored by the tricky Giant.

Few knew what the disguised Swallow had discovered, that the Giant, with his devil's horns, was a traitor to the Nomads as well as to the Mound-builders. He was a villain. Leading all his best men, hundreds of them, he meant to drive the hunt along the east bank of the Mississippi River to a spot where they would fall in with the Nomads as these hordes crossed the Father of Waters coming east, below the big ravines at Galena, in Illinois.

At the big Snake effigy, near that town, he had

already arranged for such fearsome ceremonies as would impress the wildest of wanderers. He meant to take command of the whole Nomad army himself from the head of the Snake.

For the Swallow to tell the elders of the Giant's duplicity would not change anything. In their minds the Giant could do no wrong. They would think it clever of him to combine the two nations, Mound-builders and Nomads, with Prairie du Chien leading, of course.

Whatever his hunting warriors may have suspected, they did know positively this one thing: The Giant liked to be in the spotlight of a rising moon. To keep in his favor, the hunters curbed their own speed and set a pace which his long shanks could outdistance. So when the game drive was in full cry, up hill and down dale, past important towns, the Giant, himself, was the biggest sight of the whole event.

At the beginning of this hunt, a handsome stag, a stag of twelve, wounded by arrows, some of them sticking in him and leaving a trail of gore, crashed ahead of the huntsmen, a gallant and pathetic figure.

One hundred feet behind the deer ran the Giant, the dramatic chieftain. "There is no one like him," yelled the onlookers. "Greatest of rulers—he is ours! The Giant—the Giant!"

Another hundred feet behind the Giant labored

the foremost hunters as though trying to catch up with him. Only one hundred feet!

By the merest chance—by a turn of luck—by a strange accident—it happened that other hunters beside the Giant's bowmen were abroad in that early evening hour. Those other native hunters, wild and savage, the always dreaded wolves, had caught the scent of the laboring stag. In hot-footed chase the pack came into the drive from a narrow ravine, just behind the Giant.

The Swallow shrilled his whistle in the whelp's ears and sat upon it to control its excitement. The whelp must not run loose.

The Giant, going at full speed, heard the lighter footfalls and the quicker breathing of the panting beasts at his heels. Instantly he sensed what they were. Fearfully he glanced over his shoulder to make sure. Panic-stricken and confused he missed his footing. The Swallow saw him fall headlong. To the wolves any sort of meat was their game. They piled on him a score at once.

In a minute his own hunters' copper axes were striking at the yelping pack. More and more hunters, warriors, townspeople and slaves, came running and shrieking to battle with this common foe.

The wolves were driven away.

But that one minute of time, that one hundred feet of space, made help too late for the Giant.

All these people, wringing their hands and hiding their faces, joined in mourning. And there near East Dubuque they buried their Giant and those who fell trying to rescue him. In full hunting regalia, arms and trophies, with splendid ceremonies lasting until midnight, the slain were covered with a mound which would finally be piled up into something like seventy feet in diameter and a dozen feet in height.

Immediately the people planned to have an effigy of him in half relief, showing his horns and fine physique, so well done that it would never be destroyed but might ornament the region forever. If the tomb were in East Dubuque, then, the effigy must be in Sauk County.

Of all the dismayed and worn-out hunters of the big game drive who slept near the new mound that night, only the Swallow and the truants woke up at dawn.

The Swallow, still a beggar hidden in yarrow, kept the whelp "Down." He waited to see what difference the death of the Giant would make in the report he must carry.

But the quartet with shrill and frantic cries aroused the camp in panic. When all sprang up to follow with their half-opened eyes the pointing fingers of the four, the whole crowd, like one man, fled shrieking from the place.

Fascinated by terror of the supernatural, by twos

and threes, by dozens and scores, they came back quaking, afraid to return, yet not daring to stay away. They had childlike hearts, these bold hunters. Clutching one another, they stood as only superstitious savages can stand before the ghostly, the miraculous, the impossible.

For there upon his own tomb, tall and straight, adorned as usual and without a scratch, was their Giant. He was alive and calm and commanding. His voice was much stronger than it had ever been. "Do not be afraid," he called. "I will lead you as before."

He commanded them to get breakfast. Subdued to the point of tears they got breakfast. Then he told them to march on. A docile army, they marched on. The twin had taken his brother's place.

The quartet, dumfounded, after much whispering together, presented themselves for a renewal of secret promises. The Swallow drawing as near as he dared, saw the Giant look at them with eyes like a reptile, heard him swear at them in the same blasphemous words that last night's revengeful shadow had used, and heard him hiss, "I do not know you. I never will know you. I don't need a quartet."

The Swallow had found out that there were two giants but nobody else knew it. What would happen if some one would say, "This is not your Giant;

this is your Giant's brother—an impostor—a cheat?" Nothing would happen! To these people a giant was a Giant. A Giant come back to life, as they thought, indeed, as they had seen with their own eyes, had so awesome effect on their minds that nothing could shake their faith in the miracle of his reappearance.

This second Giant was much louder and more evil than the other. Whatever hope the death of the first Giant may have wakened in the Swallow's breast was gone when the twin brother took his place. All the evil birds of the northwest had gone together and entered the body of the marching Giant. When he stalked about, the Bad Spirit was abroad.

So while the Swallow, completely baffled, was making off toward the Calumet to meet his Michigan Farmer, the truants sat down to weep in bitter anger and remorse. They had sold themselves and their country and had not gained a thing by so doing.

A spearsman punched them with a flint point and they had to take their places among the hunters and the fighting men and the riffraff. Trying to regain their former standing by shifting about among these groups, they moved along.

They were lost in the mob, that terrible devastating horde, which during the late autumn was destined to overrun the Middle West with fire and carnage and dreadful havoc, under the command of

the unearthly, atrocious Giant who was the center of a whirling storm of crime and destruction sweeping over the heart of the North American continent.

The trail stretched ahead to the Big Snake Effigy at Galena in Illinois. After the orgies there, Nomads and Prairie du Chien warriors and hunters and slaves would take the buffalo paths toward the southeast. To these savage raiders, as they threw aside every restraint, it was an adventurous road to victory—Fort Ancient in three months—Chillicothe in five!

VIII

FARMER

JOY filled the Swallow's heart and ran gayly through his veins as he caught his first view of Lake Michigan. He stepped to the edge of the bluff, folded his arms, threw back his head and gazed and gazed as though he could never get enough of the most beautiful sight of his whole life.

Sunrise was throwing all the colors of the opal across the sky. The water reflected them. North, south and west, the great fresh-water sea gleamed like a gigantic jewel.

He had never looked at any expanse of water wider than the Ohio River and the little northern Indiana lakes. This boundless flood was so lovely that it took his breath away. He could not see across it!

Gulls sailed up and down. Their wings were like silver against the blue as they rose higher and higher. When they turned about to come down again, they were silhouetted in black upon the whitecaps farther out.

The staccato cries of these gulls were like nothing

he had ever heard before. It was a brisk morning late in October and the waves lapped the shores with the rhythm of a song, the simplest, sweetest of tunes. He felt that he could listen forever. The twittering of bank swallows' voices rose from beneath his feet. Their notes emphasized the music of the water and the faint accompaniment of the rising breeze.

The young Farmer, who had been the Swallow's guide for the last week, sat down with his back to the lake and his eyes upon the rapt face of his friend. He had brought many people safely through the tamarac swamps and over the oak ridges by the same path that he had led the Swallow.

Some of these travelers had noticed the fields of purple asters and the acres of goldenrod as they passed. But none had ever stopped again and again on the dangerous trip to admire them as the Swallow had done.

Early frost had caught the forest leaves while they were still full of sap so that they had turned into brilliant colors, vermilion and yellow maple, red oak, scarlet sumac, orange beech.

The riot of tints and shades captivated the Swallow who was used to seeing southern leaves fade and droop before the frost came to touch them. They were never so gorgeous as these.

To the Farmer, born on its shore, the Big Lake was literally his meat and drink; its sandy beach, his

hearthstone. When he brought a man to this spot and he called the bluff "dirt" and the lake "water," the Farmer was disappointed.

But as the Swallow, without saying a word, showed plainly that he thought this bluff was the top of the world and that the shining path of sunlit waves stretching to the horizon was the high road to romance and adventure, the Farmer was happy. He even loved the Swallow's dog, that ungainly whelp who had been a nuisance every hour of the whole trip.

Both boys had wrapped their feet and legs in buffalo skins to protect themselves from the rattlers in the swamps and the fires on the muck. There was no way to cover the whelp. It had to be carried. They did not like that idea and neither did the whelp. A trying time followed.

Stocky and sturdy, built for endurance instead of speed, the Farmer was a runner who had been trained to carry weight. In every way he was a contrast to the speedy Swallow who traveled light.

He looked at the whelp and when that gawky pet acted as though it understood its master's mood, the Farmer was almost as gratified as the Swallow was because the whelp unbidden dropped "Down" to lick his feet on the edge of the bluff.

"*Good* doggie! Good *doggie!*" and the Swallow laughed aloud. "Let us, all three, run along that

path of light across the water and see where it goes!" he exclaimed.

"I'll show you," offered the Farmer. Pulling away some of the sparse grass, he smoothed the sandy soil. With a practiced forefinger he began to draw a map.

The boys threw themselves flat on the ground, resting their chins each on a left hand, drawing and pointing with a right and waving and kicking their heels above their backs to emphasize their words. The whelp cocked its ears and looked on.

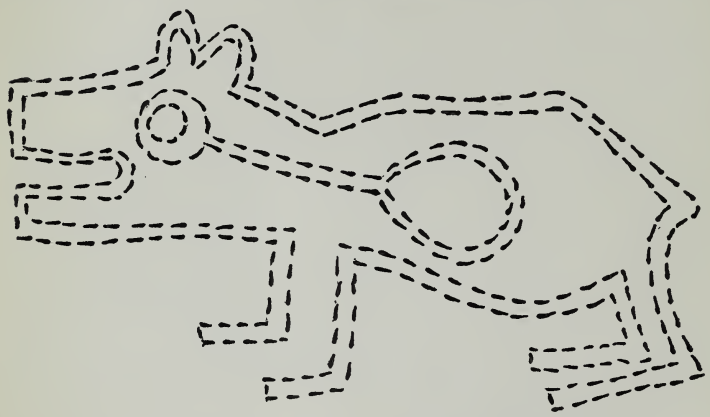
The Middle West had no book-reading people three thousand years ago. It had no written language. Traditions satisfied its people. After the fashion of story-tellers from the beginning of nations, its talkers deftly mingled the true with the false to form legends that could be repeated with never ending charm.

Sheets of birch bark had picture writing and painted people on them and were sometimes sent like letters from one place to another. They were meant for the day only and were easily spoiled.

Often pictures were drawn in colors on the walls of dry caves. Sometimes they could be chipped on a handy rock. If these drawings and chippings tried to tell a story, they were pictographs. If they were merely outlines of objects, on a rock, without a story,

they were petroglyphs. There is an old, old notion that anybody can tell what a picture means.

Weavers in basketry and cloth, modelers with clay and carvers of stone expressed their ideas in original design and fantastic patterns. Some of their portraits and sculptures and symbols are full of beauty and action. Many of them reveal much of the be-



QUEER BEASTS WERE CHIPPED ON ROCKS.

liefs and customs of the Mound-builders. But nobody sat down and wrote the history of his time and tribe and tried to keep its records.

Few birch-bark rolls even of a much later time have been preserved. No writing on stone is found in the earthen forts.

The map maker had the simplest of all plans. He kept his lines in his mind's eye. All his work was

first-hand. He made his own observations and platted his routes with his feet as well as with his fingers. He pointed at a crow flying and then followed it.

The Farmer sketched Lake Michigan with surprising accuracy. "No one will ever be able to cross the lake," he said. "It is too deep and wide and has many sudden storms. But in a canoe any one can go around the shore. There are five big fresh-water lakes." He drew them. "To the east and west of this whole country"—he made wide gestures—"far, far, far away are other lakes, wider and longer, of salt water. No one man can paddle round them or draw their correct shape. They are called oceans."

He put his finger on the map where Isle Royal was marked. "Here are the copper mines. Trails and water routes run out from the Isle like light rays from a star. The north star stands much higher there than it does here and very much higher than in your more southern country." The Swallow agreed. He had noticed that with awe. "I run by that star. It is a northern man's best guide," the Farmer told him.

Such pride was in his voice that the Swallow asked, "Is it as many days and nights distant as it looks to be, following that star to the copper mines?"

The Farmer laughed easily. "By foot and canoe

I made that journey, carrying weight both ways. I brought back the copper from which our big kettle, the largest ever known, was made. It will cook a whole deer at once. During our town's Harvest Festival to-night you shall have your supper from the stew now cooking in it."

"Do all these west coast farmers travel as much as you do?" queried the Swallow. "A runner can seldom do anything else."

"My father, who is also a farmer and head man of our village, likes to have me stay at home and so he lets me go when and where I like," answered the Farmer.

At this, the Swallow made question marks of his eyebrows.

"Because," answered the Farmer, "the more I roam, the sooner I will tire and be content to live in one spot."

The Swallow nodded thoughtfully. "All the Mound-builders of the Hopewell type have restless habits. They migrate back and forth. Your tribe is the only one of our nation on this side of Lake Michigan. There is another on the east coast near Detroit. Over in Wisconsin on the Father of Waters at Prairie du Chien is still another. We move on and on. Walls of earth do not hold us. And yet we are sworn enemies to all wandering Nomads."

The Farmer's lips grew quizzical. "My father will not join with the other Mound-builders to fight the Nomads if that is what you have come on purpose to ask him to do."

The Swallow looked downcast. That is exactly why he had come. "Why not?" he demanded. His secret mission could not be hidden from this sharp-eyed Farmer.

THE FARMER THOUGHT ABOUT THOSE TATTOOED SAVAGES.

The answer was what he had feared. "All the towns in Ohio, Indiana and Illinois are throwing up earthworks toward the northwest and entrenching themselves against the prowling foe. But we have the Big Lake on the west, swamps on the south and east, burning muck and quicksands on the north. We are friendly with our neighbors. They are not Hopewell folks nor Mound-builders nor Nomads, just good-natured in-betweens. Father says he will stay here and defend himself as they do. He is tired of being a gopher and declares that never again will he dig himself in."

"But he will let you do as you please," sighed the Swallow whose feet ached from the three hundred miles of useless running.

"Oh, yes, some of us young fellows will follow you south if we want to, not otherwise. Everything here is volunteer work, no trained soldiers."

The Swallow complained, "Some years the locusts are a pest, other years, the cutworms. This year it is the Nomads who worry us."

"I might come," conceded the Farmer. "It's no farther than some places I have been. To the pipestone quarries of Minnesota, for instance, and the salt mines of Illinois."

"And I to the salt mines of Kentucky and the mica mines of South Carolina," added the Swallow. Both had been on very long runs and wanted to brag —not too much, of course.

"I would rather carry a load," decided the Farmer. "It is so much safer than a secret message. Have you ever been captured and tortured and made to give up your news?"

The Swallow shook his head, but he grew pale under his tan, as he always did when something reminded him of his July night in the buckeye with the Nomads running under him.

The kind-hearted Farmer noticed the change of color and went on to say quickly, "Every one of these mines and also the alabaster caves of Indiana

are all centers for trails running out in every direction. They cross and recross one another and any bit of news spreads all over the country by word of mouth, as you very well know."

The Swallow, now exhilarated by the lake air and intrigued by the names of strange places, became an eager listener. So the Farmer said, "My third long run was across the Mississippi to the Missouri pottery clay deposits. Runners from the Rocky Mountains and the deserts of the Southwest come in there. Oh, the wonders they have seen! Marvelous countries are farther than the Southwest land, past where any of our people have ever been and beyond the ones that are beyond!"

"Tell me," begged the Swallow. And the Farmer went on to say, "There are races, Mayan, Toltec, Aztec, Inca, who build their mounds of white stone and carve it." White clouds like dazzling snow were piling up over the lake in the west, an ethereal city rising before his enchanted eyes and reflected in the water, so that the Swallow answered, "I can believe in marble mounds and imagine how they look. There is one here."

He pointed to his dream city and when the Farmer smiled his appreciation, the Swallow remembered, "The Trader at Portsmouth has delicately carved stone pipes and gorgets and chiseled portraits different from those our workmen cut. And

sometimes our own folks imagine that the handsome effigies look like us and we buy and trade for them and keep them for our own portraits," and he chuckled at the vanity of Mound-builders.

"Then there are people who dwell upon the cliffs. Their houses are high in the air," continued the Farmer. "They go up to these houses by ladders which they can drag after them."

A ladder was something new to the Swallow. The Farmer described it and then he drew a picture of it and still it was a puzzle. "I'll show you one," the Farmer promised. "For when I came home and told about ladders, our village was soon moved from the grand rapids of the Grand River, where we were often attacked, over to these steep bluffs. No one can come up here from the beach unless we drop a ladder down to him."

"You had to abandon all your old mounds at the rapids," said the Swallow. "What a pity!"

"There were fifty of them," the Farmer remembered. "But they were not defenses. All of them were ceremonial. We can build more such mounds here. And the natural defenses of this place are better. We are protected by bluffs, by quicksands, by burning muck and by swamps full of reptiles," and he grimaced when he thought how heavy the whelp felt when it had to be carried above the reach of copperheads in the berry patches. "The ring

which encircles us is safe for villagers but fatal to enemies."

"No town can have anything more beautiful than the lake, more graceful than your trees and flowers or more useful than your garden beds. I'm glad it is so safe," rejoiced the Swallow.

The Farmer told him, "To make our garden beds, we had to learn of our alien neighbors. Through our work together we became friends."

Some early genius who was a landscape gardener by instinct, had taught this west coast to lay out its cornfields in long parallel lines with ornamental circles to break the sameness and make the plot a thing of beauty.

Three little fishes were planted in each hill. Magic help and phosphorus fertilizer were thus combined. This aid to nature had brought about a startling result. Instead of a husk around each tiny kernel on the cob that the Indian maize originally had, these little husks disappeared, the grain was larger and the only wrapping was the one outer husk on the full ear!

Squash were planted so that their vines could be trained in wreaths like a flower bed. Some of these beds were exactly like a big wheel laid flat on the ground with hub, spokes and rim neatly outlined. And yet, curiously enough, no one knew that a wheel

could be set up on its rim and made to turn and carry weight.

Beans were planted in one set of lines going north and south and another going east and west, so that the whole crop looked like a nine-patch quilt. Muck land, or peat, gave big yields.

Michigan tobacco, which was never very rank, was set out on eighteen-inch ridges. Raised up in this way, the sandy soil got more sun and the crop was better. The patterns in which the ridges were laid out were so fancy that a tobacco grower was considered something of an artist. Sometimes he cultivated peppermint.

Many times, as he went along west and north of Kalamazoo, the Swallow had stopped the Farmer so that they might both survey the gardens. He liked to study them.

And now lying by the great lake amid such peace and beauty, he thought, "How much better to combine with alien neighbors, as these Michigan folks do, and create something good to eat, than to fight with differing nations as the Ohio peoples did. Some day we will destroy each other. When two nations fight they both get licked. There is no such thing as a fair fight. Even the side which thinks itself the victor is badly damaged."

The Swallow rubbed the muscles of his tired legs.

"Oh, I do wish I could live in Michigan where everything is so quiet."

The brisk wind was increasing. The Swallow moved close to the whelp and leaned against its warm coat. The Farmer smiled, "That whelp is your blanket. I noticed last night that you were both cuddled together. Let me give you my rabbit-skin blanket. You are not used to the climate here. I have another blanket and you will find this one light enough to run in."

The Swallow, who never wore a blanket, was too chilly to refuse. He wrapped it gratefully around him and they started to walk rapidly along the top of the bluff toward the village.

"Do you see those four men ahead of us?" asked the Farmer, pointing. "With copper axes they have chopped some saplings and have driven them deep into the ground. Come on and you will see what a ladder is."

When the two boys and the whelp came to the men, they told the Farmer what he already knew, that a storm was brewing and if the two wanted a run on the beach, they had better go down now while the netted fish were being hauled up. But they must return promptly upon call.

So the Swallow got a view of a thong ladder with wooden rungs, hung to the stakes and swinging loose like a spider's web across the bluff. He hated to

take off the rabbit-skin blanket, and he felt squeamish about crawling down that ticklish-looking thing. But the fishermen went and the Farmer went easily and as a matter of course, so he dared not refuse. Even the whelp could see that its master was unskilled in ladder work and it ran around among the men left on guard at the stakes and howled dismally.

The descent was perhaps some hundred and fifty feet. With no crevices, the bluffs extended three or four miles each way from the ladder. The beach was narrow and hard. From it the boys had a turtle's-eye view of the world above. It made the horizon lower, the bluffs perpendicular and the water flat.

They took a swim in the water and had a race along the sand; then lent a hand at hauling the nets. The morning's catch was a big one. Lean years were unknown to the fishermen living on the Great Lakes in those days. Men on the ladder guided the loaded nets which were pulled up the face of the cliff with main force by the fellows above.

Many little fish leaped out and threw themselves clear of the water and flopped about on the sand. "Big-mouth bass are chasing them," the Farmer informed him. "Bass are our gamest fish and some of these are ten-pounders."

The variety of fins amazed the Swallow. Open

mouths, red gills, sharp tails, gold, silver and iridescent scales were in graceful motion on every wave. Muskellunge as big as a man stared at them and huge sturgeon glowered. Splashing and churning waters filled the air with noise while the excited whelp left on the cliff howled and howled again, distracted by the echoes of its own making.

There was so much foam and spray, such changes of light and shadow, the surprises of a disappearing horizon, a mirage of ducks swimming upside down, that the whole world seemed unreal like an adventurous dream.

Whenever the wind quieted, fog would settle down. When it blew again the mists would drift away. It seemed to the Swallow that clouds dropped out of the sky and bounced on the surface of the lake in bubbles. They rolled and floated here and there and then lay still again.

Left alone on the beach the boys ran wild. They were lashed with spume and raked by flying sand, drenched by the waves and pelted with the first drops of rain.

Shouts from the bluff turned them about. Fog to the north had lifted again just as a curtain might be swung aside. Quite near them was an immense fleet of canoes. Some already were landing.

"Nomads! Nomads! Nomads!"

The Farmer, in violent action, yelled, "The lad-

der—ladder! You go first!" The Swallow went up the ladder like a squirrel. He did not have to be told how to do it. No one could have made better time.

The Farmer followed. He grabbed the bottom round and carried it up with him. All his tribe had been taught to do that. It cut off pursuit. But men rushed toward them throwing darts, shrieking threats, casting spears. The wind came in catspaws. The ladder wobbled and swayed. The aim was poor. While the Nomads danced up and down in rage, the boys were hauled over the bluff's edge. There were arrows in their hair but none in their bodies. So they crawled over the edge of the bluff into safety.

The Swallow, wrapped in rabbit skin, huddled against the whining, bewildered whelp and watched the scene below. He was so shocked he did not notice that the whole tribe of villagers had turned out and was lying on the bluff, shoulder to shoulder, all peering over just as he was doing at tragedy heaped on tragedy.

The Nomads who landed on the beach were running this way and that, hunting for a crevice or a slide to give pursuit up the bluff. Others wanted a quick shelter from the storm. Many paddled rapidly south searching for a creek mouth to harbor the fleet.

Those fish of prey, the big-mouthed bass, cheated of their little fish dinner and in fighting mood, leaped at the birch-bark canoes as though the frail craft were bait thrown at them.

They struck the bows and sterns and ribs. The impact stove holes in some. Several sank. Many capsized. There were confusion and shouting and more capsizing. A lot of men had to swim to land.

The hurrying storm crashed down. Waves swelled and broke like milldams. The Nomad fleet —the canoes that a few minutes before had expected to land in triumph—now came tumbling ashore.

In those days, centuries ago, before time and weather had so much changed them, the lake was higher, the bluffs steeper, the beach narrower and scarce above calm water level.

The water was merciless; the beach could not yield.

Storm wind threw tons of water upon the sand.

The Nomads were caught between waves and cliff base.

That October day was short. When the clouds parted the sun was going down in the west, the moon was rising in the east. Whippoorwills called sadly. The minor notes of frogs shrilled like melancholy piccolos. The faint incense of burning leaves spread over the villagers.

Along that sparkling water path, that beckoning

glorious route, which the Swallow, at sunrise, had wanted to follow to its happy end, the Nomads, now, at moonrise, hundreds of them—dead—dead—were drifting out to sea, washed away to farthest shores on the long golden beams of the Farmer's Harvest Moon.

IX

PRIEST

THE November Moon is the Leaf Falling Moon. It is then that the hills are veiled in lavender and Indian summer seems the best season of the year.

Crisp mornings are full of men's activities. All day long lively thoughts bubble like air in cider. Sun shines through the leaves that are still hanging and makes a bright mosaic of those that lie on the ground.

Blackbirds wheel in chattering flocks all ready to migrate. The hazy sky is their long trail.

On such a morning over a brilliant woodsy path, sometimes called the Potawatomie Way, came a band of very young men running with noiseless tread. In what is now Michigan's Van Buren County, they swerved at a right angle and turned into the Kalamazoo Portage.

That corner marked their point of decision. It was here they must say whether they would go on or turn back home. Not a moccasined foot hesitated. They determined what their whole future should be

when they swung round the bend with light hearts and were off and away over the sandy loam of Michigan prairies.

They were going toward Little River Portage near Fort Wayne among the lakes of Indiana. And so on up the hills and through the valleys of Ohio, they took their course. Then down, down south they went to the strongest of the earthworks of the Mound-builders, the hub of their system of defenses, that stupendous Fort Ancient.

This journey had been planned after many long talks between the Farmer and the Swallow about the Biggest Chief and the Capital at Chillicothe. At the very beginning of their friendship, the Farmer had argued, "It is not possible that the fertile Middle West with its walled cities, fortified towns and enclosed villages, with armories of flint weapons and stores of food, and with thousands of strong volunteer defenders, can be in danger from scattered tribes of Nomads who have few weapons and no permanent homes or landed resources of their own."

The Swallow had countered, "On Lake Michigan, you have just seen five hundred Nomads and caught a good view of part of their fleet. Only the accident of a storm saved your town."

The Farmer pondered, "Perhaps they might, in time, have found some way round the bluffs to our hidden village. The handful of men we left at

Grand Rapids, where our sacred mounds are, had to run away when they saw many canoes on the Grand River. Otherwise they would have been clubbed."

More serious than ever before, the Farmer went on, "If you know, and a Swallow does seem to have means of finding out, that there are really many more canoes where these Lake Michigan robbers came from and even more spearsmen farther south, then there is nothing else to do but fight for our lives."

As he looked out over his father's tribal lands and studied the defenses, he debated in his own mind, and the other young men of his age and class, watching him, followed his thoughts. "Were the acres of burning muck meadows, and the stretches of swamp quicksands, ramparts stanch enough to protect them in a general uprising of Nomads?"

Some one spoke aloud, "If the biggest fort in Ohio is to be the center of attack, part of us must go, for should the fort fall . . ." and they all hesitated to predict the next event.

The Swallow's dark eyes were much too big, his face very thin. His sprightly eyebrows had become drawn in straight black marks to emphasize his anxious expression. He was overworked. Recruiting was wearing him out. More and more he was

becoming the ardent patriot ready to sacrifice himself for his nation.

He was brave and he had no notion of giving up, but his spirit was weary.

He longed for the prayers of that kind old man, his father's brother, the Priest of the Great Serpent Mound. A hand on his head in consecration and a holy voice in guidance were what he needed. He was very young for so much responsibility. An older man, his priest, could counsel him. His soul was hungry.

His passionate plea for help, coming from his overcharged heart, met a warm response among the stalwart youths of the Farmer's tribe, who had begun to crowd around whenever they saw him. To them all, the Swallow declared, " 'Tis true that we Mound-builders are many and strong, fully armed and stockaded. But there are even more of our enemies. In ferocity they outstrip us. By torture of messengers they gain ends that we would rather lose than win in such a cruel manner. They are fiends."

His face was very pale with the strain of his overlong runs and his too keen knowledge of the troubled future. "The Nomads are now on the warpath. From all directions they are advancing."

"Will they join in a mass attack on Fort Ancient?" the farmers demanded.

The Swallow nodded, "Yes." Then in a broken voice, he confided to them, "How often, oh how often in my dreams do I see this glorious Middle West, paradise of populous cities, trading towns, industrious villages, fields and gardens and hunting grounds, turned by war into a holocaust."

All talking at once, the farmers had questioned him, "If we cannot stop these Nomads, will they take our country from us?"

"What will they do with it? How can they use the spoils?"

"They have no skill. Who would build up the towns they tear down? They can't construct walls."

"What would become of our arts and crafts, all the useful things we make for each other?"

"If the Nomads take Fort Ancient and conquer the Hopewell towns, what will become of us?" was the most insistent demand.

The Swallow did not know. He said, "For years and years, the Mound-builders have been trying to uplift themselves and to give acceptable service of work and praise to the Great Spirit. . . . All our efforts toward a freer and a better life may end in defeat. If our noble cities are conquered they will fall into ruin and become mere hummocks of broken, tumbled, grass-grown mounds with waters eating into them, trees sprouting upon them. We our-

selves and everything we hoped for will be forgotten."

As though the Swallow had spread out a painted birch-bark roll in front of him, the Farmer saw a picture of devastation. And he added, "Wild beasts and unthinking savages will prowl aimlessly where we proud Mound-builders now rule in power and happiness."

The Swallow held out his hands to beseech these men of the Hopewell teaching, "We are of one nation, you and I, and we must strengthen each other or we will perish utterly. Come with me!"

Like a band of young crusaders they had answered him. In great earnest, with high flung heads, they had started on the long run to southern Ohio.

The Farmer had declared he would lead them on the journey. Not a business trip for profit this time but a pilgrimage full of risk and at a sacrifice of time and energy and perhaps of life.

They all believed in immortality. It was a vital part of their religion to prepare for a future life. How could they face the great beyond unless they did bravely on this earth? How might a man die more nobly than in trying to defend his people and his country?

Better to fall struggling for the decency of homes and gardens than to live as the conquered would have to live, slaves of roving savages!

So each farmer had filled a pouch with parched corn, packed his quiver with flint-tipped arrows, taken an extra pair of elk-skin moccasins and half a buffalo robe. He was ready.

For two weeks they all had been going through the frost of lowlands and the warm winds of high places. To the defense of Fort Ancient!

It was destined to be an open winter and all outdoor creatures were loath to hunt their winter quarters. Birds were late in migrating. Passenger pigeons, those lovely iridescent doves, were still flying in huge flocks, sometimes in such numbers as to darken the air for hours at a time.

Through the moccasin telegraph, that old, old system by which one runner passed the news to any other messenger he met, the Swallow learned that the Nomads were netting the pigeons. Pigeons were their main article of diet.

The Swallow had subdued his nerves. He was nearly always calm. To stories of ravages by fire and torture he was able to turn a stolid face. But when he heard that his little feathered friends were meat for the savages, it touched his heart and stiffened his chin as no other reports of violence had done.

Those pretty birds, the passenger pigeons, during those days were as numerous as the Mound-builders themselves. Everybody loved them. No one in the

Swallow's time could imagine such a thing as that either his people or the pigeons would grow less in numbers and totally disappear.

Along this Farmer's route, the Swallow, fleetest of all the runners, the best known of the Biggest Chief's messengers, slackened his pace, held back the whelp, and stayed with his crusaders.

Rumors of guerrilla warfare, coming nearer, were repeated at every crossing of the trails. At each village the Swallow warned the people to collect their food and blankets and spears and fly to the nearest fort. Each word was like a stone dropped in water. It spread circles of alarm as far as the dialect of that town could reach. All the Mound-builders were in motion.

The soldier-like young farmers, equipped and on the run, put courage in every man they saw. And the Mound-builders, who were individual fighters, with small patience for military forms, each grabbed his spear, his rations of roasted chinquapins, herded his family beside him and set off for one fort or another.

His hair was tightly braided. New sandal-like moccasins, stoutly woven of tough grass, made his feet steady and sure for more than one battle. A snug loin cloth and a flint knife gave him confidence in himself. He could strike and slash in his own

good time and in his own way. Enemies would go down before him.

Often going twice over his tracks, the Swallow scouted to this side and to that, sometimes guarding the rear, often far in advance of the farmers.

Finally, one day, he and the whelp came to a hilltop. It was a tall bald spot with a scattering of wind-tossed hazel bushes. Behind him to the west, deep in a valley, the farmers were following along. . . . Blowing from the north, like a cloud in billows, was a flight of passenger pigeons, thousands of them.

That was a marvelous sight. There was so much life and joy and beauty in exquisite motion, bronze and gold and silver against a gray-green background. The Swallow had never before been on such a vantage point. He could see them as though he, too, were in the sky.

In watching the miracle of their wings, taught by instinct to take their way across the heavens, he forgot all else. The whelp, also, was overexcited. It tried to pull him down the hill, to push him forward, to drag him back, anything to get him away.

But the Swallow kept repeating, "Down! Whelp! Down!" And without taking his eyes from the pigeons who were beginning to brush the hazel, he added, "They are only birds. They cannot hurt us."

Never had the Swallow worried the whelp more. It could not make him listen to a warning. With a

despairing yelp, the whelp hurled itself backward, trying to knock the Swallow away from the danger it felt but could not make him understand.

The whelp jumped free but the Swallow was trapped in a pigeon net thrown over him by four Nomads. A fifth tripped and threw him while the four drew the corners of the net together around him.

If they had meant to kill him, that would have been his last minute. But for some reason they wanted to take him as a prisoner, this famous Swallow. He realized his desperate straits as he plunged headlong. He was rolled over and over. His hand caught at his flint knife and thrust it against the cords in the mesh.

The whelp like a full-grown wolf, with every bestial force at its command united in one swift motion, leaped at the throat of the fifth Nomad—slashed—brought him down.

No longer a boy's pet, it had become a dog of war. This was its first human kill.

The four other Nomads, who had planned to get both the Swallow and his whelp in the net, were completely undone by this turn of affairs. The horrid spectacle of the Nomad who had led them, done to death in the fraction of a minute, was too much for their wits. Instead of fighting the whelp or

trying to run from it, they fell groveling upon the net and begged the Swallow to save them.

With dripping jaws and bristles raised, the whelp turned to launch his rage upon them. Their frightened voices, in cracked adolescent tones, struck its ears with a familiar note. Instead of springing at them, it advanced slowly.

Under the shade of the pigeon cloud, its eyes were green fire, its fangs magnified. The four huddled fearfully together. They mouthed like idiots.

The Swallow was hacking at the net and freeing himself. He was safe enough. Bumped and dizzy he stared at the four.

Stiff-legged, the whelp went over to the four and sniffed at them. The gibbering wretches fully expected to be eaten alive.

The Swallow gasped. One enemy was dead and four were crazed. Such horrors marked the beginnings of war. *"Good* doggie! Good *doggie!"* he choked. His loving and grateful hand was laid upon the whelp. "What are you trying to tell me now? Never again will I turn a careless ear to your wolf talk."

The whelp snarled, "Smell 'em. Hark to the sounds they make." Its growl was like a word. "You know 'em!"

The Swallow stared. He did know them. The truant quartet!

The farmers, who had heard the noise and charged up the hill, formed a circle a dozen deep around him. He cried in a rage as primitive as the whelp's own, "These four deserve the same fate as that Nomad yonder, a violent and an awful end." He dug his clutching hands into the wolf's crest. While he struggled to control his pet, he overcame his own useless anger.

"But first," he commanded the belligerent farmers, "get from them, by fair means or cruel, all they know about the Nomads' plan of campaign. The details of those plans are what Fort Ancient needs most. The whelp and I will take the story at our swiftest to the Biggest Chief."

The truants, who had turned traitors to the Mound-builders to curry favor with the Giant, now gave state's evidence against the Nomads to save themselves from the wolf. It kept devouring eyes upon them and licked its jaws.

They told everything.

The Swallow's grin was not much kinder than the wolf's snarl, when he said, "You farmers can bring the truants with you. They can run. Make them keep your pace. Deliver them to the Priest at Great Serpent Mound, into the deepest inferno of all, the red-hot wrath of the Stone Fort Schoolmaster. He is there now. Take them to him in thongs."

With that, the Swallow and the whelp were gone.

THE PRIEST FROWNED ON EVERY CANNIBAL.

So it happened that now, in the last of the Leaf Falling Moon, the Swallow knelt at the feet of the Priest on Great Serpent Mound and all these events of the last few weeks were condensed in his message as he said, "Nomads in countless hordes are almost upon us. Milling with them are all the disloyal Mound-builder chieftains and the renegades of every district. In the Dark Moon of December, which is almost here, they will attack Fort Ancient from the northeast." Then he told some details and added, "Burning arrows, poisoned spears—and—and—cannibalism."

This wise Priest of the Moon Cult, a good old man, was a pagan. He lived a long time ago, when there were few other kinds of religion on the whole earth. The western world of red gold Mongol Indians did not know there was another side to the world with different kinds of people and other beliefs upon it. Every one in the Americas believed very much as this Priest did.

He raised the distressed Swallow gently and made him stand beside the Biggest Chief, who had come to this place to meet the Swallow and to get what they both needed, spiritual help and comfort. Other chieftains were there for the same reason. Their forts were prepared for defense but their minds were disturbed and fearful.

To them all, the Priest was saying, "My sons, we

have come here to bare our souls to the dew of heaven and to see our lives in just proportion. Far beneath this lofty promontory are the little red supper fires of the sons of men, our charges, to whom we owe our first duty, you as chieftains, I as Priest. High above us are the steadfast stars. The Great Spirit lives among them and marks their courses. Fix your thoughts upon the beauty and order that hang over the world. Do not lose hope in times like these when calamity comes. It will pass, but beauty and order are everlasting."

The sun had set and people from the fields and villages were climbing up to the altar on the mound where they could lift their hearts by gazing out into the heavenly blue. The majesty and permanence of those bright stars which lighted the night with never failing regularity, helped them to look toward the Great Spirit. The Biggest Chief, weighted down with cares, and the Swallow, who had come with news to add to those cares, both meditated upon the planets, hanging like lanterns in their appointed places, and prayed for the peace of their country.

These Mound-builders were religious folks, like all other peoples of the human race, to-day and yesterday, born with an instinct to worship. So they looked up to the Great Spirit and adored Him.

They were thankful for the moon by night. For centuries they had been making crescent-shaped

altars, with their tiny sparks of light like twinkling stars upon them. Groups of people were often seen marching round these altars, waiting for the moon to rise like a new promise on a darkened world.

They showed their gratitude for the sun by day, when they built round altars, with perpetual fires upon them. The blessings of light and warmth were never forgotten.

Ceremonies of appreciation for life-giving water were held near other altars which stood by almost every artesian spring within the forts or at the cascades among the hills or close to the rapids of the singing rivers.

Like all home-loving people, their domestic festivals touched their religious life in the most intimate and friendly fashion. They were not acquainted with Santa Claus but they did have a Human Tree who stretched arms of branches and fingers of twigs to drop down presents of flowers and fruit.

Jack Frost was never an impish pet with them. They made pictures of a Lightning Man, with crooked legs and snapping fingers, who scorched the maize and set the prairie grass on fire.

Satan had not entered their legends. Yet they had much to say about a Great Serpent who was bigger than all other serpents put together. That first canoe load of Asiatics who crossed Bering Straits to become Indians in America must have had

some knowledge of Adam and Eve, for they were all afraid of snakes.

As soon as any town had men and time and material enough to build a large effigy of a serpent which would be big enough to frighten other serpents, so strange looking as to keep away human enemies, that town went to work and chose some long and lofty and rocky cliff as a place to put its earthwork serpent.

The Swallow's own folks, the Hopewell nation, most nearly civilized of all the Middle West Mound-builders, built the tremendous Great Serpent Mound. It is on a cliff above Brush Creek, not so far from Chillicothe in southern Ohio, the most remarkable of all effigy mounds.

Its head lies on the point of the narrow ridge where it juts out over and above the valley. That precipice is one hundred feet high. The Serpent can see everything for miles around. It has kept an unwinking eye on the lesser live serpents in that valley for something like three thousand years.

Its body, from two and a half to three and a half feet thick, undulates along the ridge for a quarter of a mile. Its tail coils three times to make a knot. The top of its sinuous folds are on a level with a man's chest.

The kindly Priest, intent on calming his unhappy children, stood at the top of the path which led up

from the plain. He encouraged them and blessed them as they greeted him.

Upon his breast was a splendid shield or gorget. That shield, his badge of authority as highest Priest of Great Serpent Mound, was many generations old. Engraved in delicate lines upon the copper was an intricate pattern, symbol of the revolving heavens.

"Let every man do his duty with a brave mind and a quick spear and the coming danger will soon be a thing of the past," he told them all.

Comforted, they joined in a procession that was making a formal and dignified march around and about and in and out of the twistings of the effigy. Chants and choruses, firm and triumphant, were led by the secondary priests and medicine men, who were gorgeously arrayed in all the autumn colors.

In the group with the Priest and the Biggest Chief was the Medicine Man from Cincinnati. He had sent many men, fully armed, to Fort Ancient, had brought many more and had commanded still more to follow. After the Swallow had told his story, the Medicine Man felt that even more soldiers were needed, so he sent his personal runner back to Fort Miami at the mouth of the Miami River asking for men who could throw heavy stones.

But he kept his assistant conjurer near him. This satellite, with his stage properties carefully hidden, was very clever about effacing himself.

The Schoolmaster was stationed among the chieftains. He represented the Eagle Chief of the Stone Fort. His dynamic forces, carefully drilled and with double equipment, were already training other volunteers at Fort Ancient. The truant quartet, guarded by burly stone ax men, with pointed teeth and pierced ears, was never out of his sight.

The Biggest Chief voiced the Mound-builders' most pressing need, "If we only had a little more time, just time enough to man the roads and passes leading to Fort Ancient. In the fort itself we have men and arms and ammunition, food and water and stores for a big battle or a long siege. Our best commanders are working the men on the trail defenses now—for more time—a day or so!"

If the Nomads were not quite so near!

They all stood gray with anxiety. Even the whelp had ears, tail and head drooping like a tired old dog. No one could change the situation. To move from their appointed places on the mound that night would be to confuse all the military plans.

The Cincinnati Medicine Man was the only one who seemed alert. His glances darted here and there. Laughter wrinkles deepened in his cheeks. His twinkling eyes traveled over the view from the Great Serpent's head. He scanned the trees on the other side of the creek.

It is true he was now an important chieftain, a

ruler of a city, a man of dignity. But first and foremost he was what he was born to be, what he had trained himself to be, a Medicine Man, a magician, a showman. He could always see a spot where a few dramatic touches might be useful to gain a needed end.

The Brush Creek neighborhood was to him a fine theater. The top of the cliff was its stage. He saw himself at its center. Putting his lips to the Priest's ear, he whispered. The Priest's face, lined with the emotions of three-quarters of a century, showed astonishment, then tolerance, then relief. He nodded, "Yes!"

To the Swallow the Medicine Man murmured, "Spies are in those trees over the creek, watching us."

"I know it," groaned the Swallow, "and in the grass everywhere and among the bushes."

The Medicine Man chuckled and sparkled. "Let us give them something to report, something that will cause their leaders to begin a thirty-six-hour conference. Thus will we gain a respite for our men in the hill passes." Then he whispered to the Swallow the same words that had intrigued the Priest.

The Swallow had played opposite this quick-witted showman once before. He wasted no time now. "I'll do it," he promised. "Give me my cue."

"In one hour from this time you must be lying,

with the whelp standing beside you, between the Serpent's mouth and the mound in front of its mouth. When I hiss—hiss—hiss, make the whelp howl his longest and loudest hunting call, three times."

"The whelp likes to howl. It is easy to make him do so."

SOME ORNAMENTS WERE VERY QUAINT.

For an hour the spies watched the Great Serpent seeming to turn and twist in the wavering shadows. Then they saw the Priest kneel on the mound in front of the Serpent's head. He cried to all the marching people, "Stand still. Do not be afraid. Our Serpent threatens only those who work evil. I command you to keep quiet."

The Serpent hissed and hissed and hissed. Then

it howled and howled and howled. Brush Creek echoed and reëchoed to that haunting call until every one in the neighborhood rushed out to see.

Upon that weird sound, before the wondering eyes of the Priest's people and to the terror of the watching, superstitious Nomad spies, the Great Serpent lifted up its huge head.

It spread broad flaming gills like a ruff about its neck, opened its wide blazing gullet, big enough to gulp down a dozen men. Then it rolled immense eyes, twin balls of fire and stuck out a long, long tongue of crackling, red-hot flame and showed its fangs.

Rolled its eyes—stuck out its tongue—showed its fangs!

X

WARRIORS

WINCHESTER is burning! Burning! Winchester is burning!" This was the cry of a spent runner coming into Fort Ancient.

The Swallow, standing in his official position, close beside but slightly back of the Biggest Chief, became still and stiff, like a figure carved in wood. Winchester was his home town. And now, "Winchester is burning! Burning!"

The Biggest Chief slowly turned his eyes upon the stricken Swallow. All color was gone from the boy's cheeks. It came flooding back again, that young red blood, staining his neck and chest, his arms and legs and even his feet like a blush. But he stood without moving. Many strong emotions, rigidly controlled, under the glance of his ruler, turned him pale again.

The Biggest Chief did not say a word but the Swallow could feel his sympathy as plainly as though he had voiced it.

Gradually the Swallow's face became a mask of Oriental calm. The expression of a fatalist settled

on his smooth forehead. In this hour of trial, any observer might have seen his long ago Asiatic forefathers' look reappearing in his almond-shaped eyes with their ever so slightly slanting eyelids, specially in his resigned mouth and in his attitude as he folded his arms, crossed his legs and sat down upon the ground to meditate upon the fact that "What will happen, will happen."

In exactly the same position, the Biggest Chief dropped beside him. Among the hurrying workers of the fort, these two sat like statues for an hour.

The Swallow was thinking of Winchester. Its high earthen walls topped with the log fences called stockades, deep outside moats of swiftly running rivers and the mammoth outworks about its western gate, were all pictures in his memory.

It was too solid to be taken by one assault of the northwestern Nomads as they came past it to their rendezvous at Fort Ancient. From such scattering tribes, Winchester could defend itself for days by the passive act of keeping the gates closed. Nomads could not stop now to besiege it. They were on their way to bigger conquest.

Winchester's round basket-like houses, so gay and cozy, woven from hickory and willow, had each a layer of puddled clay spread over its bark-shingled roof. These roofs shed water and could not catch on fire.

If a burning arrow struck in such a place as to ignite the willow wands, the clay roof would fall down upon the conflagration and help to smother it. Artesian springs were in the fort and the shallow moats inside the walls were always full of water. Every man had a skin bucket at hand.

Like other fortified towns, Winchester was as strong as men could make it. If it fell, then, "What will happen, will happen."

Rousing himself to his daily tasks he became, once more, the active messenger, the quick and busy American.

In the seven days since the Great Serpent had spit fire at their spies, the Nomads' leaders, all upset by the story of that kind of a snake, had remained in a state of doubt, wondering what to do next. They were all ready to fight men but a fire-breathing reptile was another matter.

During this interval, Mound-builder workmen had doubly guarded the passes as the laughing Medicine Man had hoped they would have time to do. And the Swallow with the whelp at his heels now ran only from one part of Fort Ancient to another, carrying orders to perfect its defense.

A much larger fort than Winchester was this place in Ohio. It was almost a mile long. When he went around it on top of the walls, which were irregular because they followed the outlines of the

cliffs at the edge of the plateau on which it is built, he had to run three miles. One hundred and twenty-six acres are enclosed within it.

It is a thousand feet above sea level. The Swallow had never heard the words, "Atlantic Ocean." Fort Ancient was built a long time before the Icelandic Vikings crossed the sea, and a very, very long time before Columbus dared its uncharted waters. The fort is ancient.

In circling about the walls, the Swallow left the Old Fort on the south and ran along an isthmus of narrow connecting fort to the New Fort on the north. *New* three thousand years ago!

When he looked down from these massive walls, which were strengthened by stones and flanked by terraces, he could see the river bottoms more than two hundred feet below him. The roar of the tumbling streams came up in chords like music to his ears.

Masses of rose haws and clumps of ginseng seed pods caught his eye, red as the cardinals singing in the high tree tops within the fort. He could look to what seemed the very edges of the world, far, far away on the wide horizon, so splendid was the view from Fort Ancient.

His flying moccasins never stumbled, his nerves were steady. The whelp was sure of foot. But even the Swallow, who was never afraid for him-

self, could not watch another person walk the Old Fort walls above the deep and narrow gully on the southeast. To see a man moving on that dizzy height was to think of what might happen if he fell. The bravest warriors shut their eyes and trembled when they saw the Swallow and his whelp upon those ramparts. No stockades were needed for the walls over the sheer precipice of this Old Fort gully.

Sentinels climbed up to lookouts above the seventy-odd gates of the enclosures. The most vulnerable point was the northeast wall. It faced rolling meadow. The stockade was extra high. There were places on the inside for scaling it and its very top had a foothold for a day and night patrol.

Many generations had worked on this fort. No living nation is ever settled in its habits. There had been different types of Mound-builders through the ages. As speech and manners and customs and resources changed, the people made alterations in this place of defense. Friendly tribes had combined in the dim past to throw up earthworks on this plateau and to furnish it with arms and stores.

If it were possible for an enemy to capture every fortified town in the Middle West except Fort Ancient, that place alone, with the forty thousand Mound-building people it could shelter, might easily begin another nation with the fort as a center.

So all Nomads knew that they must not waste

their strength, great as it was, when they came in from different directions, by trying to take Winchester or the Stone Fort, Cincinnati or Portsmouth, Newark or Chillicothe or any other city where the women and children had been placed under double guards while the young men were in Fort Ancient.

Nomads must all rush together at that fort and hurl their warriors with speed, ferocity and cunning against those walls. They expected to overrun the Fort Ancient earthworks with superior numbers, drive the Mound-builders out and keep the place for their own stronghold. From it the Nomads could then sally out to capture all other fortifications by sieges and at their leisure. Think of the spoils that awaited them!

That Great Serpent had made them pause for a week or so, but it could not hold them back for long. Even the fully prepared keepers of the hill passes did not expect to stop the Nomads. All they hoped to do was to fling down such crushing stones and sharp flint darts as to harass and to make breaks in the dense masses of warriors and so to scatter them.

Among the last allies to enter Fort Ancient was a tribe of fighting men from Newark neighborhood. Beside their bows and arrows, each had brought his winter fur smock filled like a basket with fresh cranberries from the Bucyrus bogs. Also each had a

brace of turkeys. They were wild turkeys of the early type with short legs and blue heads.

Not far north of the fort, as these men came through hills and meadows running parallel with the trails they dared not take, they had seen turkey heads above the grass of a knoll and heard the gobbling. Although they had turkeys, they silently acted together and let fly a dozen arrows. Each had hit a Nomad under the turkey feathers.

Then they knew that the fort was surrounded. So they broke through the cordon by leaping over the slain Nomads and dodging through pawpaw thickets and running for the gates.

This report of Nomads lying in wait was definite news. It would probably be the Mound-builders' last word from the outside world. The fort's men swirled about these Newark folks and excitement grew into a clamor. All the Mound-builders were ready for action. They wanted to show their spirit in battle.

The fort was in order. On a place that could be seen by every warrior as he passed to and fro was the council fire glowing day and night. Around it sat the Priest and the elders. There were several from each city. They were the men who guided the Hopewell nation. The conduct of the war and its outcome were their responsibility.

To them the Biggest Chief, as their Executive,

showed respect and courtesy. They gave to him an affection and confidence pleasant to watch. The Biggest Chief's sincerity and simplicity endeared him to all. As he walked about the fort in his scarlet feather and his scarlet loin cloth, every one remembered him as he had looked in his copper armor, fighting six men at once to avenge his father. And every one, no matter how lowly his position in the nation, knew that the Biggest Chief would do the same thing for him.

He was their hero, their best beloved, the greatest warrior they had ever known.

The Swallow was the Biggest Chief's dependable messenger, his friend and his deputy. The Swallow's tilted wing tips, his warm smile and his lively feet, satisfied the Mound-builders' ideas of manly beauty. The rangy alien whelp, whispered to be a man-wolf, added awe and romance to their thoughts of the Swallow.

His shoulders had broadened, his chest deepened. He never thought any more of the big deeds he would perform in the future. He was much too busy for that as he worked with the necessary things that must be done to-day.

And now sometimes in hours of anxiety, the Biggest Chief would ask the Swallow's opinion of some projected defense measure. This was confidential also. And the Swallow, without vanity,

would honestly tell what he had been able to learn of such matters from the different forts he had visited. It was in these hours that the Biggest Chief began to call him "Brother."

With the advent of the turkey hunters, the Swallow hastened to make another round of inspection at the foot of the walls on the inside where the moat lay.

This moat was fed by springs within the fort, particularly by a spouting spring in the New Fort. This spring's waste water running round the moat was kept in healthful motion by schools of fish and flocks of ducks. Fresh-water mussels had been planted in deep places and cress bordered it. The ever useful rushes had numerous root holds and grew stoutly.

This was a domestic-looking duck pond more suited to a farmyard than to a besieged citadel. But any Nomad spy who scaled the wall and dropped into a duck pond was just as wet and as easily caught as though he had plunged into a military moat. And think what a diversion between battles were fresh fried fish garnished with cress and roast duck with mussel dressing!

Beside the spring was an altar mound and around the mound were big chunks of salt. The wife of the Biggest Chief and her women, who were literally ladies-in-waiting, sat on these salt blocks. Each

brave knew that if he were wounded in the approaching battles, these women's hands would withdraw the arrow tip, clear running water would wash the cut, salt would be sprinkled on it and bandages tied. This place was their hospital.

On some spots were piles of hickory saplings about five feet long. Women were peeling the green bark down eighteen inches from the smaller end. The stripped part of the wood was cut off. A chipped flint spearhead was set upon the sapling and tied in place by the supple green bark. When the bark dried the spearhead was so firmly set as to be like part of the shaft.

Stone war clubs, deeply grooved, were sometimes fastened on their handles with wet leather thongs, which made tighter and tighter bindings as the thongs lost their moisture.

The best bowstrings, the Swallow noticed, were made of eel skin, so tough and elastic that one would last for three men's use, for father, for son and then for grandson.

There were several large basket houses of more than one room and many smaller places that the Swallow must inspect. These had storage pits of corn, sunflower seeds, chinquapin, hickory, hazel, and walnuts, dried huckleberries and plums, pumpkins, squash and frosted wild grapes, dried fish and

jerked venison. Bear's grease was stored for shortening corn cakes.

Under other shelters, skilled hands were keeping the warriors' clothes in order. Not many women and almost no children were in this fort now. But there did have to be a nurse and cook and seamstress with bone needles and hemp thread. Wild hemp grew as tall as corn. Warriors wore loin cloths woven from its fiber. For heavier cord, these seamstresses used the handy grapevine.

With it they laced up the fronts of the fur and leather smocks or shirts which they wore like coats. These were not as well tailored as the clever Eskimo winter clothing but were much better than a loose blanket. Grass and leather moccasins were tied on with grapevine. It answered every purpose of a piece of twine.

Such clothing, securely fastened, was agreeable between oneself and the rising wind of this second week in December when the alarm came in at midnight, "Nomads in the grass!"

The fort became a turmoil.

People ran in every direction, quite distracted. Blazing pine knots made such blotches of light and shadow that all the people seemed to be in a mad dance. But the Schoolmaster with his clarion voice kept his command in order and moved them to their

appointed places on the northeast wall. The attack was almost sure to center there.

The farmers, one hundred and fifty of them, ran along in single file, firmly toeing in, each one stepping in the footprints of the one ahead of him, just as they had done on the trails. This was the biggest event of their lives. In the midst of their climbing to get into position where they could set their arrows to meet the first rush of Nomads at daybreak, they each and every one had time for pity toward the Michigan boys who had stayed at home to husk corn.

Neither the Stone Fort men nor these farmers were afraid of Nomads. They had seen savages before and wild scalp locks and wilder faces, made hideous with paint, could not scare them. They knew the danger but they did not hesitate to face it.

Most of the chieftains from the different towns had some sort of discipline among their warriors. They all obeyed the Biggest Chief. The Medicine Man did not command his braves. He let them fight when and how and where they pleased like sharpshooters. He regarded fighting as a personal pleasure in which any man might indulge as he saw fit.

The Medicine Man preferred diplomacy to violence. His ideas of diplomacy were peculiar. For instance, as soon as the alarm came in, he donned

his conjurer's suit and put on his mask which was more startling than any painted face. The noise of his rattle was keyed at such a pitch that it made an obbligato above the din of the fort.

In the glare of the torches, he paraded the top of the stockade like a cat walking a fence, dancing, cavorting, rattling and singing. This was to encourage his own men and to mystify the enemy who were known to be hiding in the grass of the big meadows stretching away toward the north.

The grass was much overshadowed by faded ironweed and seeded goldenrod. The fall rains had beaten this growth down somewhat and the Mound-builders, seeing that it would shelter crawling foes, had gone out many times to trample it as flat as possible. They had no scythes. Cutting it with copper axes, tangled and wet as the weather had left it, was a hopeless task.

The Medicine Man, as a diplomat, liked to see a battle stopped at any stage, so he had noticed during the last twenty-four hours that the southwest wind was drying the meadows. In such a wind it was poor policy for the Nomads to attack and risk shooting against it. But they had been delayed so long by the talk about the Great Serpent that they were impatient and wanted action. Under cover they were waiting for the dawn.

The Medicine Man skipped back and forth along

the topmost path. He noticed the direction and force of this wind and where it hit the grass beyond the shelter of the fort. More excited than any one else, he laughed aloud.

It was still gray night when he snatched a torch from a guard and began to juggle it, snatched a second and juggled both. He was known to be a fire maker and a magician and the Mound-builders who saw him playing so dangerously were diverted even at this serious time. But when he took a third and then a fourth torch they were uneasy. He might slip and fall and then the Nomads would get him before they could let down a rope.

As they worried about him, the dreaded accident happened. He fell sprawling and clutching at the footholds. The torches, instead of dropping down, flew at different angles, far out and over the meadows, striking the ground where the wind was shaking the goldenrod fluff.

A cry went up from all the watching Mound-builders. But it was not so loud a noise as was made by the hidden Nomads caught so suddenly in a racing prairie fire.

Fanned by the increasing gale, the flames licked the bare legs of the savages. Smothered somewhat in the still damp lower growths, the fire sent up thick clouds of smoke, which choked and blinded the whole army. In utter rout, they ran this way and that.

They could not be rallied. There was no clear eye nor cool head to control them.

The Medicine Man rescued himself and sat astride the stockade top. He held his sides. "Ha-ha-ha! Ha-ha-ha!" he went and "Ha-ha-ha-ha!"

The sun was coming up, dim and red and big, as the smoke began to drift away from that scorched and dismal field. The Mound-builders had not twanged an arrow or lost a man, yet they had won the first battle.

After following with their eyes the almost endless crowds of savages fleeing through the smoke, the Mound-builders realized, as they came tumbling out of the big gates to stare and wonder, that these Nomads were stronger than themselves.

There were many more of the savages and they were twice as ferocious as semi-civilized Mound-builders. They were still coming toward Fort Ancient from all directions. The leader of the north and western hordes was the Giant. This chieftain was everywhere in motion. As soon as the different tribes from east and south arrived, he demanded and received the command of the combined forces.

The Biggest Chief knew this Giant's history. The Swallow, who was the only one that had discovered the Giant's secret, told the Biggest Chief how this brother had put himself in the place of his twin who was the rightful chieftain of Prairie du Chien.

As he grew more and more powerful, the Giant's torture of captives increased as did his severity to his own men. Each morning he appeared in armor before the Main Gate of Fort Ancient on the northeast corner and marched back and forth across the paved entrance way between the two high signal towers and the Main Gate itself, hurling insults at the fort's defenders and calling the Biggest Chief hateful names.

The Giant spoke the language of the Moundbuilders and his words sounded as though he might have been raised in Ohio.

On one particular morning he came out with his face washed. All the paint was off and he showed his natural features as he held up his head for all to see. He threw back the horned and hideous topknots and called the Biggest Chief by that one's boyhood name.

"I dare you to come out by yourself and fight me," he yelled. "Let our armies see who is the best warrior."

The Biggest Chief promptly mounted to the lookout and stared at the face thus presented to him. "I will come for a trial by combat," he replied, "but tell me first, is this you or is it your brother?"

The Giant flew into a rage. The Swallow, his heart swelling with love and pride and fear, helped the Biggest Chief into his copper armor of head-

piece, shield, ear spools, bracelets and anklets, to match the Giant's. Last of all, he handed over a copper knife and watched his Biggest Chief walk unattended through the Main Gate, down the wide road which led between the twelve-foot-high signal mounds guarding the entrance.

This road went for nearly three thousand feet toward the northeast and then turned with a half circle about a platform mound which stood there like an outdoor stage. The road was used as a stadium. It was one hundred and thirty feet wide and for its whole length was bordered on both sides by parallel walls not much more than a foot high and twelve feet wide, which could be used for bleachers.

Spectators could sit on the low wall and look over their own hunched knees, at the dancing, wrestling and acrobatic contests of their athletes or they could stand and throw stones and knives at the unlucky enemy captives who must run the gauntlet to the platform mound.

The two armies gathered rapidly as the rumor of a duel between the Giant and the Biggest Chief spread. Not daring to go outside of the fort lest they start a battle with the Nomads, the Mound-builders struggled for places on the walls. Over the stockades and on the earthen tops of some of the fortifications, they hung by thousands like blackbirds on a tree. Their braids dangled, their arms

THE WARRIORS SHOUTED FOR A TRIAL BY COMBAT.

waved, their spears jostled, and their heels beat a tune, so constant was their motion. Their voices made the noise of a high wind in tree tops.

The Nomads came closer and closer. Seeing that it was to be a truce, they began to step upon the bleachers near the far end by the platform mound where they could not see anything and by degrees shoved one another forward, until the bleachers, the road and the fields were crowded with savages who whooped and howled and hopped about, gyrating like whirligigs. Their painted faces were full of the lust for bloodshed.

Trial by combat is older than history. It has always been popular, because no one is hurt except the two who fight. There is often keen enjoyment in the feeling a warrior has when he hears hundreds of men cheering for him and knows that a whole nation is on his side hoping for his success.

The Biggest Chief and the Giant dueled with copper knives almost as long as swords and twice as heavy.

The fight was a long drawn out affair of barbarous skill and brutality. Both audiences knew what to expect and how to look for the different points of what they called a good game. The knives clashed one against the other with grinding and banging sounds. They flashed in the sun.

The Giant was so tall as to make the contest seem unequal. The Biggest Chief was nearly six feet and both muscular and agile. It was interesting to watch him. Several times he slashed the Giant's flesh. These surface cuts gave the duel the sanguinary effect the savages and—alas—also the Mound-builders wanted to see. A fight was a fight and it ought to look like one, so thought the spectators on both sides.

Back and forth, from side to side, leaped the two warriors. They crouched down and then jumped up at each other, this way and then that. The knives gleamed in fire flashes.

At every motion of the chiefs, both armies screeched. At each whack of the knives, they whooped the louder. These two were presenting a much better match than it had promised to be at first. It was a good performance lasting almost long enough to be thrilling.

All at once, the Giant, who had not been able so far to touch the Biggest Chief, rose to full height and brought his knife down on the Biggest Chief's shoulder with such force that it went in deep, smashing the shoulder blade and going in under the bone down into the walls of the chest.

The Giant made a gesture of pulling the knife out; but contrary to all the rules of the game, he left it there. Crazed with the agony of such a stab, the Biggest Chief tried to grasp the knife. It was too far back and too far down and too far in. He could not dislodge it. Desperate then, full of pain and rage and with the horrid weapon still sticking in him, he plunged at the Giant with the strength of a maniac and knocked that surprised enemy flat and set his armored foot upon the Giant's neck.

When the Nomads saw that their chieftain was beaten they hissed him. He squealed for mercy. That, too, was against the rules of the game; a duelist should not ask for mercy. He was not expected to give any and certainly not to beg for any.

The Nomads groaned and growled. They were ashamed of their Giant.

But the Biggest Chief came to himself. His nation was watching him. He must act as a great man should act. So he did not put an end to his foe in the usual manner of a barbarous conqueror. Instead of that he lifted his foot away. Throwing back his head, he said so loud that all could hear, "I spare your life, oh, tallest Giant, because we were once boys together in Chillicothe and played at dueling for the sport it gave us."

How proud the Mound-builders were of their Biggest Chief! So young, so brave, so handsome, victor in this combat with the savage ruler of all the Nomads, so much taller than he was! And what a magnificent gesture of giving an enemy his life! Even a thick skull could appreciate such sportsmanship. The savages would probably take unfair advantage of it afterward, but at that moment they caught a glimpse of how superior a civilized man might be and they cheered—yes—cheered!

The Giant, black with fear and anger, ferocious with his own men for applauding the Biggest Chief, rose from the dirt and shook himself like a filthy beast. As he went backward from his adversary, he showed, in every inch of his eight feet, what a miserable savage he had allowed himself to become when he taunted his generous enemy with these

words, "Because we were once boys together and you outdistanced me, I have not spared your life. Death is upon you—I have killed you. You can never escape the poison of my knife that is in you. Death to you, oh, strong and Biggest Chief!"

At this, as both armies listened astounded, the Swallow ran as he had never run before and the Farmer and the Schoolmaster and the Medicine Man followed. They closed round their chieftain. But he begged hoarsely in a low tone, "Do not touch me. Stand back. Attend at a distance. I must—I will—walk upright from this field as a victor!"

And so he did, at what cost of pain from that awful wound no one will ever know. Proudly he marched with a firm step and a straight back, gayly tossing parts of his armor as he took them off, to those friends who attended him at a distance, his headpiece, his knife, his shield, even the belt about his waist.

Grudgingly cheered by the savages, trebly applauded by his own army, he walked from the field and into his fort and the gates clanged upon his triumphant figure.

Just within the gates were the open door-flaps of the Priest's sanctuary. There stood that good old man with outspread hands and the bold Biggest Chief, as soon as he had entered and was hidden

from sight of both enemies and friends, collapsed like a little boy into the arms of a father.

While the Farmer and the Schoolmaster ran for more and more and more salt water, the Swallow held the Biggest Chief's hands in a strong and heartening clasp and looked into the injured man's brave eyes with a courage of his own that never faltered.

It was the Medicine Man who pulled the knife from the shoulder and helped the Biggest Chief's wife to wash the cavity. It was his sharp eyes that peered into the wound trying to follow the course of the cut under the bones and among the moving muscles and the membranes—too low—much too low—down in the chest.

The Swallow was perfectly steady. He never looked aside, but he could feel the Priest stiffen as he, also, made an examination. The old man said very quietly, "I, myself, shall bring to the Biggest Chief a cup of the blessed water from the cauldron over the perpetual fire upon the altar of the water spirits."

The fort's people, standing about in suspense, made way for the chanting priest as he said, "Behold! The breath of the water spirits is bubbling in the cauldron and rises in a fine cloud of vapor above it. All the signs are propitious. The breath of the water spirits has a healing quality. We will wash the wound with the blessed water." So the

priest fetched the boiled water which cooled as he walked and was used at once.

After their patient had fallen into a doze, the Priest, surrounded by the Swallow and the Farmer, the Medicine Man and the Schoolmaster, washed the Giant's knife. It was crisscrossed with scratches, scratches that had been deepened purposely. Its point was jagged. And every scratch and every jag was green—green with verdigris—verdigris, the deadly poison.

Eyes met eyes. Each man saw the gravity in the other's face, "If an abscess forms under the bone where it cannot be washed or drained, there is no hope," is what the glances said.

They seemed to hear again the snarling vengeful words of the Giant, "Death is upon you, oh, Biggest Chief!"

XI

WATER SPRITE

DREARY December days in the month of the Dark Moon were filled with sadness and foreboding. The Swallow's heart was heavy.

At first, the Biggest Chief walked gallantly, ignoring the slow poison of his wound. A necklace of bittersweet berries, gay in its color and in its cheerful suggestion, was thrown over the otter's skin fur coat protecting the cut that would never heal. There was no cure for the lingering agony of his diseased blood, that copper poisoning, pyemia, for which they had many names but no certain remedy.

Nomads with renewed strength and with never ending racket beat upon the gates in the twilight. They assailed the walls at dawn and let go showers of burning arrows whenever it was cloudy. In the outer walls of the fort were more than fifty gates and these had to be manned day and night.

But the Mound-builders, inspired by the fortitude of their Biggest Chief, met ferocity with their longest spears and cruelty with the heaviest clubs. The Farmer was the Swallow's best man at the battered

gates and the never tiring tribe of Michigan youths lent courage to all the warriors.

The misty Dark Moon was waning.

A week went by. The Swallow was always on duty. The otter's fur hid his strong hand which supported the Biggest Chief's elbow and his leg which held the injured man upright. Often in the mornings the ruler was free from pain and showed least the ravages of his disease. 'Twas then he appeared before his many warriors and made his formal call of respect upon his elders about the council fire and discussed with them the probable points of that day's attack upon the fort, how best to keep the Mound-builders in health and their forces in fighting spirit, how long their immense stores could be expected to last the fifty thousand people now crowded into the fort.

He showed a calm and forceful face to those with whom he talked. To his warriors he gave his military orders about the barrage of arrows for scouting parties, the sallies of spearsmen, the positions of rock-throwers, the duties of spies and the condition of every man's feet.

Even the conduct of slaves and the spirit of the hired troops from the Trader at Portsmouth received his serious attention. He was just to all with the keen insight of a born leader. He was their beloved commander. They obeyed him. They knew

he was hurt but they thought he was rising above the danger and they were hopeful for his recovery.

On certain mornings he reviewed troops not then on duty. Dressed in his robe of pearls, with his burnished copper headpiece, his copper bracelet that was his insignia as commander of Fort Ancient and with two men to hold aloft the thirty-eight pound copper ax, emblem of his rank as Greatest Grand Ruler of every Mound-building town, he watched the fighting men of the fort as they went through their maneuvers. He was attended by his wife and her retinue of Newark nurses and helpers, by the Priest and his votaries. With the Swallow at his side to take his special commands, he inspected the tribes from every region. The fighting men of Fort Ancient on its big parade ground in the center of the New Fort made a splendid barbaric show.

But after each midday meal, hidden in the Priest's house, with the Swallow and that solid rock of dependable strength, the Farmer, the Biggest Chief shook and shook with chill. His skin was turned blue by the cold within him. Then slowly, fever followed the chill, mounting faster and hotter by the hour, until he was scarlet with his own heat. In the quiet of midnight came the sweat which so exhausted him.

His gratitude to the beautiful wife who never left him, to the Swallow and the Priest, the Farmer, the

Medicine Man and the Schoolmaster, was pathetic. They had come to be the power behind his throne. He was thankful for the care they used to hide his distress and growing weakness from the eyes of the fort. Only those in that little basket house of woven branches, merely one of hundreds of such houses,

A WATER CARRIER DREW HIS OWN FACE ON HIS JAR.

knew that the Biggest Chief was failing every day. The depths of his wound could not be reached, the poisoned abscess could not be washed by the blessed water, could not be healed.

Another week went by. The Dark Moon was only a cloud-like segment when seen in the daytime. The nights were long and cold and black. Everybody was beginning to shiver. At first the

struggle to put out the fires caused by burning arrows had kept them excited and busy and warm. But more and more poisoned darts were striking down the guards. Clean water in great jars near every post with plenty of salt could not always save them. A whisper began to go around that the Biggest Chief's wound was getting worse instead of better.

Slowly the fear of an epidemic, a premonition of death, crept through the fort with the waning moon. Dread of the Giant grew. He was a shadow of evil spreading over them.

The Swallow's heart was torn with sympathy for his Biggest Chief, his mind clouded with doubt for Fort Ancient's future. He prayed for the longer days and the brighter nights of the Snow Moon. He could not leave his Biggest Chief for long at a time and so the whelp, more gaunt than ever and whining to itself, was taught to walk the walls alone.

No arrows could strike it; its life was charmed. The Nomads creeping along the wide terraces outside below the walls of the fort, or hiding in the half hundred irregular gullies, where springs, creeks and waterfalls had cut their way down into the valleys from the high plateau of the fort, felt their hands grow clammy when they saw the green fire of its eyes glaring down upon them. On such nights,

it seemed to them to be that haunting creature of their grisly myth, the man-wolf.

The blackest of all the nights was the time for the change in the moon. The fort was quiet as the sleepless Swallow went to the small doubly barred gate, which never had to be guarded, over that deepest gully toward the southeast corner. He always spoke to the faithful whelp when it reached that point. The whelp was taking on human qualities. It liked to be praised.

To-night the whelp leaped to the ground. It had something to tell him. "Open the gate," it demanded as plainly as actions could speak. The Swallow let down a small shutter, or wicket, in the gate and by the flare of his pine-knot torch, looked into the rose petal eyes of the Albino, the Cave Dweller. "Let me in," he whispered in his quaint speech.

The whelp fetched the Medicine Man. Together they opened the gate, pulled the Albino through and fastened it again without a sound. This unexpected guest was swathed in cloth dyed brown with walnut juice. It was a cloak of invisibility. He had come from Seven Caves straight through the southern Nomads' triple lines and no one had seen him.

"Impossible," cried the Medicine Man, "to travel this black night!" He stared at the white face of this boy who was a stranger to him. "It is not

black," contradicted the gentle Albino. "It is dark. I can see in the dark."

The Medicine Man shook his head, "No man can scale that cliff even in bright sunlight. Certainly not at night."

The Albino smiled, "I can scale it. I can and I did. But I'm not a man; I'm only a boy. A water sprite showed me how to climb up through the cascade." His eyes were wide, their pupils much enlarged, and joy lighted his face as he said, "A water sprite is dancing above every spring and pond to-night. Thousands of good water spirits have caught hold of hands as they rise up to the fort. They are circling round it in a magic ring."

Not quite believing this, the Swallow perked one eyebrow up and drew the other down as he opened the wicket to take a peep outside. His sudden change of expression caused the Medicine Man to shove him aside and to look himself. The torch-light showed a line of wavering, misty shadows, now white, now gray, floating past, as delicate as the vapor above the altar cauldrons.

Slipping out of his wrappings, the Albino displayed his white hair in neat braids, hanging below his knees. He had on a snow-white loin cloth and he pulled out a pair of white grass sandals. He apologized for his bare feet by saying, "I had to uncover my toes to get a hold on the cliff."

The Medicine Man who knew that the hand is quicker than the eye and who had fun almost every day of his life showing people interesting objects which did not exist, now scratched his head and stared open-mouthed at this impossible elfin boy who might be a water spirit come down to earth.

The Swallow explained, "My friend, the Albino, was born without color, just as your pet crow was hatched with white feathers. There is sometimes a white man as there is sometimes a white crow. Such a one can see in the dark."

The Albino came quickly to his message. "The bag of pearls you told me to save, I gave to the Trader. For them he has brought a thousand Mound-builder warriors nearly here. The last thousand warriors, those savage reformed Nomad warriors, with their officers and informers, which he sent you, have not been paid for. He must have more pearls or a promise of more pearls before he will forward any warriors, either Mound-builder or Nomad, beyond the town where they are hidden." He took a deep breath. "The Trader will send warriors to help Fort Ancient, if you, the Biggest Chief's Swallow, will promise him half of my next year's pearls."

As the Medicine Man grasped this plan of security, he blurted, "This is the Trader's country. If Fort Ancient falls, his own city of Portsmouth is doomed. Why does he not risk life and fortune as

the rest of us are doing? He ought to send as many men as he can and trust to luck for his pay. We did. What did you say to that greedy man? Tell him to come in person and bring his own spear!"

The Albino lifted his innocent face. "I told him he might have all of my next year's pearls, but that promise is not enough. I must have a bondsman. The Swallow's word is necessary. Will you go back with me, my Swallow?"

The Swallow's distressed eyes sought the Medicine Man's glance, but that conjurer's whole attention was fixed on the lovely Albino with hair that reached below his knees. Never had he been so intrigued. Something big to assist the fort should be done with such startling beauty.

The whelp was nuzzling the Albino's hand begging for a friendly pat. The Swallow was learning to take responsibility, so he came to a quick decision. "Take the whelp with you on leash. Go back to the Trader. When he sees the whelp he will know that I give my promise. If the Trader will send his braves at once, loose the whelp and it will come back to tell me so."

"The whelp might chew the leash and come back too soon," was the Medicine Man's objection to this plan.

"I'll cut a lock of hair from the whelp's crest," and the Albino's white, white fingers touched the

spot, "and that would say the Trader's answer is 'Yes.' "

The whelp liked the idea of a walk outside, so it was leashed, the Albino wrapped up again, the door opened and closed. No one had noticed the little group by the gate, no one was told about this action on a rather forlorn hope. The reinforcements might not come. A slender boy and a clumsy whelp might not be able to get through the Nomad lines.

"Will the Trader's men arrive in time—if they do arrive—to hearten our defenders?" the Medicine Man wondered.

The Swallow shook his head. "The Nomads will attack again to-morrow night. Our warriors will have no spirit to wear them down," the poor Swallow began to weep like a broken-hearted child, "for our Biggest Chief is dying. It is only a matter of a day or so," he sobbed.

The Swallow led the Medicine Man to four different high towers, one after the other, and showed him, in every direction, closing in upon the fort, the red, angry-looking fires of the Nomad camps. "All of our fighting men are in perfect condition now. Each has three loyal and seasoned helpers. Armorers, nurses and cooks are always ready. Every foot and every stomach in the fort is exactly as it

should be. And yet—and yet—these Nomads outnumber us five to one." What would happen tomorrow night?

And now in the third week of the Biggest Chief's hurt, the mornings were frosty and the breath of the water spirits rose in white vapor on the sunbeams. The Priest had been much disturbed because the water from the cauldron did not heal the Biggest Chief's wound. So he had a cordon of young priests, in relays, march round and round the altar, day and night, chanting praises to propitiate the spirits.

This ceremonial was an impressive sight. It never grew old or commonplace to the troops who went past the blue limestone altar with its bright red perpetual coals under the great yellow pottery bowl which held the sacred water, to watch the pale mounting steam so wavering and white against the changing December sky of green and purple and to notice the serious faces of the attendant priests. They kept the cauldron full and the heat under it uniform. They pitched their singing voices in key with the sizzling coals, the bubbling water and with the occasional patter of tiny rain drops when a change of breeze condensed the steam into a shower which fell like a benediction upon any who paused to watch this marvel. Each priest carried a gourd.

When the water in it cooled, it was given to the nurses for use in washing arrow scratches.

Troops coming back from long hours of patrol or going forward to duty on the walls were uplifted in mind and body by the visible presence of the healing spirits and a drink of the holy water.

Seeing all this, the Priest had established other cauldrons on other water altars. The largest one was beyond the Crescent Gate which went from the Middle Fort into the Old Fort. But the Priest worried. Why had not the Biggest Chief's cut been healed by the water spirits? He was dying, even now. What would it do to the whole morale of the fort if the water spirits failed in the case of its Biggest Chief? That fort which held as many people as a city and was full of work, motion, noise and the seething of the strongest of human emotions?

The Biggest Chief as his weakness increased and delirium followed his fever, grew more and more sensitive to the feelings of the intimate group about him. He could understand the fears they concealed so carefully; he could read their thoughts. The solid objects about him became unreal and the shadowy presence of things of the soul became tangible to him. The spirit of prophecy touched him. He looked into the future without shrinking.

On the morning after the Swallow and the Medicine Man had made that round of the four towers,

THE WATER SPRITE KEPT HIS CAULDRON BUBBLING.

the Biggest Chief appeared in the Old Fort at sunrise. Many people saw him near the water altar and passed the word to the Middle Fort and the New Fort until he was surrounded by a great crowd calling greetings to him.

The Swallow and the Farmer lifted him shoulder high and held him above the heads of all. The throng stirred as it watched, for he took off his copper bracelet, the wide, glittering copper bracelet, that was the sign of his supreme command of the fort, and slipped it on the arm of the Swallow.

There was no sound, not a voice was lifted, for the Biggest Chief's face wore an exalted look, his eyes were large and very bright and his words were clear, the words of one inspired, as he pointed to the steam rising from the cauldron on the altar. "Oh, my people, the Great Spirit is calling—is calling me! I go to join my father and the vast company of warriors who have gloriously fallen in battle to defend Fort Ancient." And then, "When I am gone, you will meet defeat. Defeat will be followed by famine and famine by plague. Death will stalk these cobbled floors within the coming moon. All those who drink from the sacred cauldrons—and nowhere else—they will survive. Hold fast then to your places on these walls and Fort Ancient will be saved for the Mound-builders!"

With that he fell back and they laid him on a litter. The litter became his bier. Over it floated the moving shadows made by the morning sunshine through the breath of the Water Sprite.

XII

MYTH

IN the scarlet sunset of that day of the Biggest Chief's passing, the Giant appeared on the stadium, at the head of his best warriors, spearsmen, bowmen, clubmen and those of the burning arrows and the poisoned darts. Feathers, paint, dangling scalps, horrible noises and worse odors came with him.

The Giant paraded back and forth as savages always did if it was to be a battle instead of a surprise attack. He boasted, he bragged and he challenged them.

"I have conquered your ruler, your Biggest Chief," he yelled for all to hear. "My hand dealt the blow. Those circling birds with black wings, fanning round and round above you in the sky, tell me he has gone never to return." His voice rose in pitch. "This ancient fort that once was his is now mine. I have come to take possession, I, the Giant!"

The Mound-builders, stricken with grief and worn by anxiety, were not able on that dark and dreadful night to resist a fresh general onslaught of the savages who were five to their one.

The copper bracelet on the Swallow's upper arm, forced him into command of the Farmers at the head of the best shock troops, of the Schoolmaster who managed the second line of one thousand men for heavy defense and of the Medicine Man with skirmishers ready to fall into any breaks of the ranks ahead of them.

All these with many reserves drawn up by hundreds and hundreds were not strong enough. The earthen walls of Fort Ancient were full twenty feet tall, the moat below them was deep, the log palisade was lofty above them, but they were not high enough.

For the Nomads came over the wall at the northeast and north as a spring flood on the Ohio goes over the banks of that river, a rising tide, swift, heavy and resistless.

The Mound-builders did not retreat. They had no thought of retreating. They were flung, as by the sweep of a cloud-burst, across the New Fort. The Swallow, tossed up in the mass like a swimmer riding the crest of a comber, threw out his hand toward the Farmer. No words could be heard in the din, but the Farmer understood, and as they were hurled against the double gates of the Isthmus, each unfastened a gate and let the Mound-builders who were there go through them, with, unluckily, twice as many Nomads as Mound-builders.

As these gates were only one set of many and

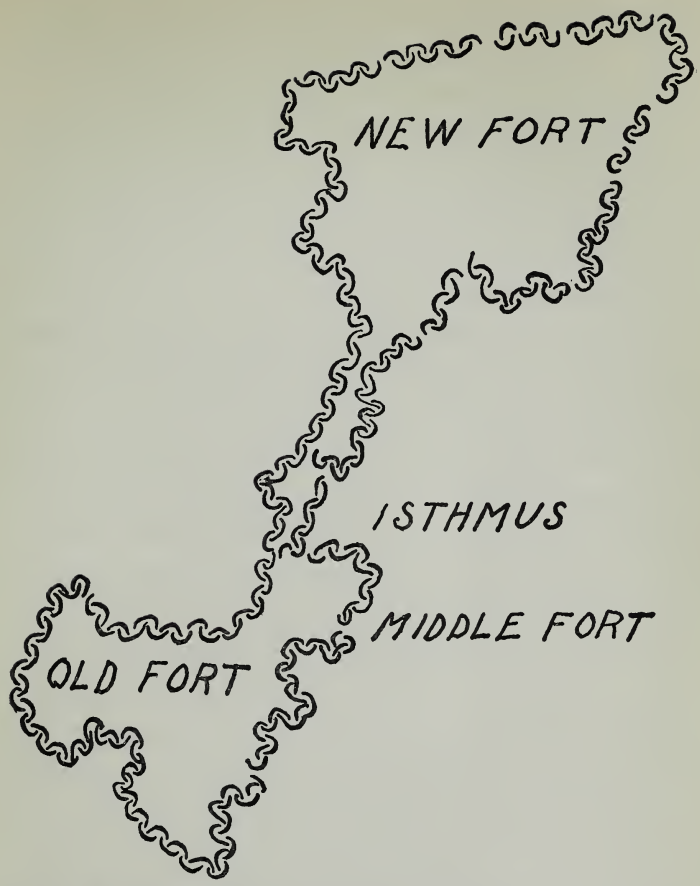
were at the farthest corner from the point of attack, the Swallow and the Farmer were able, in the confusion swirling everywhere in the sixty acre New Fort, to shut the gates again and to barricade them on the Isthmus side.

Those of the Nomads, who had come through these gates with the Swallow and the Farmer and some Mound-builders, rushed southwest with the Mound-builders fighting them at every step, until they crashed the gates leading into the Middle Fort. These gates gave way. They were called the Crescent Gates. When they fell the Middle Fort became a mob of battling forces. The Great Gateway separated this Middle Fort from the Old Fort still farther to the southwest.

And beyond the Great Gateway at the place of honor in the Old Fort, the Biggest Chief lay in state upon his bier. No savage hand must touch him!

The Swallow and the Farmer and those Mound-builders, who had been pitched so violently into the Middle Fort, now braced their sandaled toes on the stones of the floor, set their backs against the Great Gateway and fought these Nomads, who were two to one, in such a frenzy, that until this day the piles of human bones washing out from that spot through all the centuries since the big battle, appall modern people who do not like to look at skeletons.

Not a Nomad was left in the Isthmus nor the



FORT ANCIENT'S WALLS WERE THE SHAPE OF THE HILLTOPS.

Middle Fort. Not one went through the Great Gateway into the Old Fort where the Priest and votaries stood guard over the Biggest Chief.

Shut in between the two sets of gates, the Swallow and the Farmer were so busy with their own defense of the Great Gateway, they did not realize that most of the warriors of both nations were still in the New Fort. Bedlam reigned there.

Primitive warfare is often made up of personal encounters. As one of these Mound-builders saw an enemy he pounced upon him, to spear, to tomahawk or to club him. This battle was an affair of ten thousand duels. Its background was a series of blotches, of bodies painted blue and red and yellow, of loin cloths torn and flapping, of darting feathers and whisking weapons.

There were triumphant yells and screams of agony. Clang of stone hatchets against copper shields! Thump, thump of iron ore hammers on leather gorgets! The clamor echoed and reëchoed between the solid walls of one of the most splendid fortifications ever built, the citadel of Fort Ancient.

When one warrior met another he forgot all else but a desire to challenge him with a war whoop. It was not beneath the dignity of a brave at white heat to throw away his weapons and attack his foe with bare fists and flail-like arms. There was a satisfac-

tion in giving first-hand punishment to a man who was trying to steal one's fort.

The Nomads argued, "If these Mound-builders want their fort, they must be willing to fight for it, if not, they don't deserve to keep it." Upon the strength of such crude and prehistoric reasoning, many forts of the Middle West had changed hands in times past.

That night it happened—the New Fort went over to the enemy, the Giant.

Drunk with victory and power, the Nomads began a mad dance around the wicker houses which they set on fire. They forgot the few survivors who had been knocked senseless and thrown into the moat. Glutted with butchery they wanted to eat and drink. Let the other forts, Middle and Old, and what few Mound-builders were still alive wait until morning! Why not?

The Medicine Man, who could not do anything without a touch of showmanship even at a time like this, pulled many wounded men and chiefs back against the walls where they were camouflaged in the wavering shadows from the fires. The Schoolmaster helped him. Then the Medicine Man showed them a half dozen knotted ropes hanging concealed in angles of the western wall, by which they might climb over the wall, drop to the terrace outside,

run along to a gate in the Old Fort and give a countersign and be taken in.

These men jerked and swayed as they went up the rope and dropped the second length of the rope outside like a ladder. But the shadows moved irregularly too, and the ruse was not discovered. It was amazing how many men the Medicine Man could save. The very best of magic!

The iron-willed Schoolmaster was the last to leave. He had always believed in law and order and his whole life had been spent in teaching his principles. He had visions of the civilization to which the Mound-builders might attain. For his ideals he had fought to his utmost in this battle quite like a grizzly bear.

After the Nomads scaled the walls and he thought that all was lost, his rage was fever high. To make his state of mind worse, he saw at that moment his greatest failure in the way of pupils, the truant quartette. Some Nomad had noticed that they were prisoners and in a freakish kind of pity had cut their bonds. They had had just one dazed moment of freedom when the Schoolmaster caught sight of them.

They represented all his ill luck and defeat. In a passion he rushed at them. He slapped their faces. He boxed their ears. He shook them dizzily. With

all his fury throbbing in his toes, he kicked them into the duck pond.

For the rest of that night the Nomads' orgy lasted. Finally the victors fell asleep full of captured food and drink. Tired out with so much of fighting and dancing and screeching and gorging, they tumbled down like sacks of meal upon the ground and lay quiet.

The Swallow, torn and cut and bleeding and exhausted, had propped himself against the little southeast gate and slept with his ear near the wicket. The Farmer, also a sorry sight, who had been giving him cold water and salt and bandages, was now, in his turn receiving the same first aid from the Schoolmaster who had already put fifteen fresh rags on the Medicine Man.

Safe for the present, the Mound-builders were barricaded in Old Fort. It was overcrowded with warriors and with the army of noncombatants who did the general work of armoring, cooking and of tending the fighting men. The warriors had been given the best of care and now rested as well as their wounds would let them.

The elders were conferring with the Priest who was the oldest person there, when a faint whine came through the wicket. Like eager boys a dozen disabled men leaped to their feet.

The whelp came through the opened gate. From

its proud crest one lock was gone. It was sprinkled with snow, the first fall of the season. *"Good* doggie! Good *doggie!"*

The Swallow went quietly to the elders. For the first time he told them of the Trader's bargain with the Albino. The whelp had just brought news that help was coming. Could they hold the Old Fort until the Trader's men arrived? These men, a thousand of them, might have to fight their way through the southern Nomad lines.

"We would rather die defending the Old Fort than to leave it," cried every chieftain who could hold up his spear. "There are arms enough for us," said the noncombatants, "see what we can do!"

Flurries of snow were coming at intervals. It was below freezing. Hot stimulating food and fur robes were being passed around. The Old Fort was rising above the thought of total defeat. All dignity was forgotten. Priests and cooks, elders and armorers, discussed ways and means on equal terms as they ate and dressed.

At the little gate the Medicine Man began flipping about like a jumping jack. He had peeped through the wicket and there was the Albino, only one hour behind the whelp! When he entered, the white one did not take off his coat but drew it closer about him in the cold, as he panted, "My Cave Dwellers are nearly here. They are not warriors but they each

have a handstone and are bringing their own food. The Trader's men are following mine, one thousand men from Portsmouth."

When no one seemed to believe that so many men could be moved without discovery, he added, "Nomad spies are all tired. They did not notice our silent coming over the hidden trails in the dark. I have come ahead without supper or breakfast to say that the reinforcements will arrive by midnight. It is past noon now."

This news flew over the Old Fort, "two tribes coming—many warriors on the trail—if we can hold out—"

The Albino, greeted with enthusiasm by the other chiefs, sat with them eating cooked food with a spoon from a gourd just as they did. He was proud that he knew how to do it. His confidence in himself grew by leaps and bounds. He was ready for anything. He saw that the Medicine Man was whispering to the Swallow and he heard the Swallow say, "Not a Nomad nor a Mound-builder has ever seen the Albino uncovered. His face and hands are painted now. Why do you ask? Magic? Do whatever conjuring you can. The hours between now and midnight are the danger times. If another sunset attack could be warded off—"

And the Medicine Man observed, "It will be too gray a sky for a red afterglow but it may clear for

early moonrise." His face was knotted with thought as he racked his brains for some sign that would delay the final attack which might mean the death of the Mound-builders' nation.

So the Albino lowered his own voice to a murmur and said to the Medicine Man, "I am loyal to the memory of the Biggest Chief who lies in yonder palanquin. I offer myself for special service."

Upon that, the Medicine Man took the Swallow and the Albino and the whelp into a rash secret plan. He loved mystery and magic. He forgot his wounds. He hurried about.

The Swallow permitted the mad coup which the Medicine Man was planning, but he, himself, would be the person held responsible for its success or failure and the heavy copper bracelet on his arm felt like a band of ice. He had worn that insignia of a commander for twenty-four hours and in that time the Mound-builders had suffered the worst defeat in their history.

Too young for the heavy duties laid upon him, quite sallow from the seepage of his wounds, he summoned all his physical and mental courage, climbed the gates of the Isthmus and peered over into the New Fort. Light snow in the faces of the sodden Nomads had finally waked them.

He saw the Nomads sit up and then stagger to their feet. They blinked at the white world spread

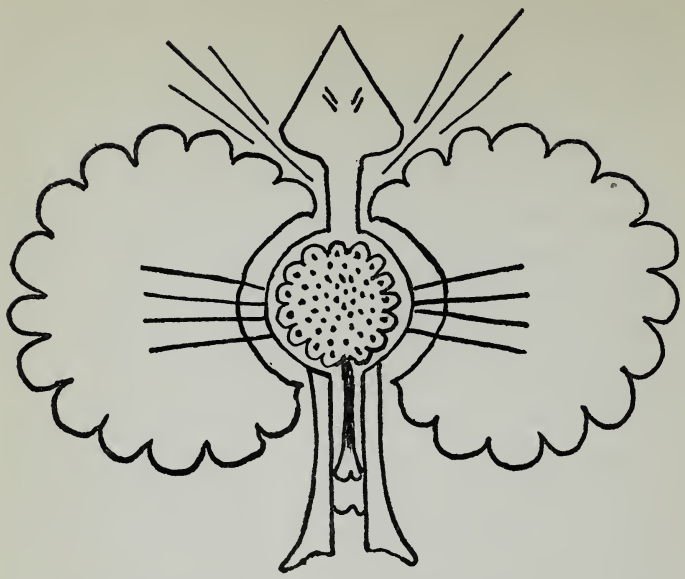
around them. A crescent moon hung above the walls. All this was in such contrast to the dim and foggy days of the past month that they stared about.

Drowsy and stiff they could not tell whether this was night or morning. After the dark woodsy camps in which they had been lurking, this high open place was strange. It was different from the fort as it had been when they captured it, one day or two days or three days ago. They could not remember how many days. They were confused.

How chilly it was! The whole New Fort of Nomad conquerors shivered like one man. They gazed around. See there! Pointing fingers shook. See there! On the platform made by the top of the dividing wall between the New Fort and the Isthmus, the man-wolf stalked in silhouette. Its green eyes snapped. Its white fangs gleamed. Not an arrow was loosed. 'Twas worse than useless to shoot at a sorcerer's familiar spirit such as this must be.

The creature, man or beast or whatever it was, threw up its head and all the earth and the heavens quavered with the hunting call it gave once, twice, thrice. Every Nomad's blood ran cold.

The Giant put his fingers in his ears and shut his eyes. He had reason to remember a wolf's hunting call. His savages looked at him askance. They knew he had overcome by magic those Wisconsin



THE MYTH WAS ONLY A MOON-DART THROUGH THE CLOUDS.

wolves who once had sought to destroy him. Why should he be afraid now? Why should he have a terror of death by a man-wolf?

A faint sound, a series of whistled notes, weird, enticing, unbearably sweet and piercing as they rose higher and grew faster and louder and shriller into a wild throbbing tune, turned every face from the Giant to the wall again.

The wolf crouched, pawed its head, shook violently and turned itself into a man! There on the

wall where the black wolf specter had vanished was a white man spirit. Clothed only in star dust, it hovered on tiptoe and faced the crescent moon, the Snow Moon.

The Nomads, gazing speechless, could see the delicate shape of its body, the grace of its supple limbs as it spread wide shining wings and moved along barefooted and naked through the silver night.

One nervous archer, quite beside himself, set an arrow with trembling fingers. Its twang and hiss were plainly heard. A myriad eyes followed it. They thought they saw it go through that spirit's body, out and up into the air fanning the misty wings. It did not harm this airy sprite.

The Nomads stood aghast. They were fascinated. The phantom turned and followed the angles of the eastern wall and came toward them along that sheer and giddy cliff. They huddled together, clutching one another and trembling as they looked.

The Giant had had much to say during the past month about the Great Serpent. No earthen serpent could have a fiery tongue or magic power. He had declared in wrath that that there was some sort of cheat about it. So now a few of the most practical Nomads scanned this spirit as it came closer and closer. They wanted to see if it was

made of reeds and thistledown or if it was some sort of a doll, a conjurer's trick.

But no! The skeptics saw what the Giant saw and what every unthinking savage saw, a fragile substance in the form of a man, but so white, so light, so beautifully winged, that their dreams had never touched on anything so lovely. When this vision came to a point on the wall nearest them, they could see plainly its perfectly made hands and feet in motion and even its little teeth. As it floated there its face was as mobile and sparkling as a human face.

This was no masked effigy. It was a living spirit, free as a breeze, loosed from prison in a wolf's body. Why was it coming to them? What would a pure spirit do to their murderous hearts? To their blood-stained hands? If it were the ghost of the treacherously slaughtered Biggest Chief it might kill them with its glance. As this fear entered their minds, it threw out its hands toward them.

Panic ensued. With shriek upon shriek they started to run. Jumping over one another, knocking each other down, plunging, racing, falling, trampling and sprawling they went, pellmell, in headlong flight, out of the gates they had entered so triumphantly.

Looking over their shoulders in mortal terror, they tore across the northeast meadows and rushed

screaming into the woods. Hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of them! All of them!

Its conquerors had deserted the great Fort Ancient, driven out by an airy moon-lighted Myth!

XIII

BUILDER

CLEAR and sweet, poignant and soul-stirring, a solemn chant like martial music rose on the early morning air.

Willow flutes warbling in bird songs carried the obbligato and drums deepened the chords. Three thousand voices rose in unison and twice three thousand feet, stepping together, added to the pulsing rhythm of the chant.

This was a ceremonial march, a great procession, the funeral cortège of the Biggest Chief on its way toward Chillicothe. Signals of smoke and fire on every lookout mound of the citadel of Fort Ancient told the hour of its departure. The tidings would spread to the cities of the Middle West.

The throbbing drums, keeping time, were talking, as semisavage drums can talk, to every listening ear for miles around. They told where the procession was going and what trails it would take.

As it passed through the wide eastern gate all the Mound-builders in the fort stood at attention. The parallel stadium walls were lined with people whose

heads were bowed. With full regalia, very proud and serious, the escort of honor had started in the bright sunshine and the piercing cold.

The long line of the cortège was magnificent and imposing. It veered from the stadium and started on a march of perhaps sixty miles toward Chillicothe. It was going to the house of the Builder. The Builder was the engineer who had designed and was constructing the Hopewell group of mounds, the last resting place of the powerful chieftains of Chillicothe.

These three thousand marchers were men of Newark. They were young, fresh troops, newly trained and in perfect condition, from the native city of the Biggest Chief's bride.

Only last night as they were coming south to Fort Ancient along a hillside trail, unnoticed themselves, they had seen whole armies of Nomads running north through the valley below, fleeing as if they had been defeated in battle.

Full of wonder the Newark men came on steadily as they had been ordered to do, to add themselves to the garrison of the fort. They had entered the gates at midnight just before the Trader's men from Portsmouth and another contingent of the Medicine Man's braves from Cincinnati and the Cave Dwellers had arrived. All of them were twenty-four hours too late!

These warriors were shocked at the news of the big battle lost. They were mystified at the story of the Myth who frightened the invaders away, horrified at the condition in which the Nomads had left the New Fort and amazed at the evidences of carnage where the Swallow and the Farmer had taken their stand at the Great Gateway of the Middle Fort.

The calamity of the Biggest Chief's death almost overcame them.

In formal array as a mark of respect they passed before that place of honor in the Old Fort where the Biggest Chief lay in state. The catafalque now held two biers for the Biggest Chief's Newark wife could not survive her grief and had perished with him.

And while these Newark men were filing along in the Old Fort the elders and the counselors and the Priest decided that the fort must give the Biggest Chief and his wife the dignity of a permanent burial at the Hopewell mound.

As an escort of honor the Priest appointed the men from Newark. They were not battle worn or wounded. Their ranks were full, their clothes were fine and they had in rigid order one thousand warriors. Each warrior had his armorer with a supply of weapons and his cook with food enough for three men for a week.

Immediately the Medicine Man was given temporary command of Fort Ancient with the Schoolmaster as head of the fighting forces left there. The elders and the counselors and the Priest were too old to go but the Swallow and the Farmer must.

The Albino would take some of his men as side guards. He did not know how many Cave Dwellers he had. He could not count them. Any number that was greater than the ten fingers on his two hands was a puzzle to him.

The Schoolmaster loved the timid Albino who had all by himself, in his own small person, saved the Mound-builders by routing the Nomads after fifteen thousand bold warriors had failed to hold them back. So the Schoolmaster helped toll off two hundred Cave Dwellers. So all the plans were made before the end of that eventful night and the escort of honor was ready to start at sunrise.

First went the advance guard of a dozen priests. Each wore on top of his own hair the bleached trophy skull of a human being. As regalia hanging over his fur smock rattled necklaces of human bones ornamented with many colored feathers. These bones showed that the concourse was a funeral and so did the beating of the drums these priests carried, which continuously marked a double thump-thump at an interval of every two minutes.

Not a savage, not any kind of a Nomad nor even

the wicked renegade Giant would dare touch such a train. Superstitious fear held them back.

Behind each priest walked his two assistants, the trail menders. These took turns running ahead to pick up fallen tree limbs, to cut overhanging snow-weighted boughs, to test the ice of rivers and bogs and to be ready to shovel drifts if more snow fell. They had to work so quickly and so neatly that there need be no slacking in the rhythmed march following them.

The marchers went in single file. All trails were narrow one-man paths. The only method of transportation over them was by one's own feet. The Middle West had no dog sleds. Canoes were limited to waterways and portage lanes.

For generation on generation, the natives of America had traveled on foot. Their endurance and speed seem incredible. Protected only by soft leather or fiber sandals and moccasins, their feet were normal and strong. Slightly toeing in, they walked on a straight line over springing turf or packed earth and knew the joy of perfect bodies in brisk motion on this winter day.

Behind the priests walked the Swallow. His wing-tips were sweeping in blue-black circles. His copper head ribbon was polished red-gold and his rabbit-skin coat was thrown back to show the wide upper arm bracelet of authority.

The Mound-builders did not blame the Swallow for their defeat by overwhelming numbers. They respected him for the strategy by which he had recovered the fort. The Mongol idea of the sacredness of the dead was deeply rooted in them and the Swallow was honored for the valor shown at the Great Gateway when he managed to preserve inviolate the bier of the Biggest Chief in the Old Fort.

Now they were trusting him to take two biers with their precious burdens through the Nomad lines and then to go some sixty miles on foot over hills and valleys on a five or six days' journey.

If the cold increased with the growing moon this march could be made. But southern Ohio had a variable climate. If the thaw of the Snow Moon came too soon, what then?

The Farmer, always beside the Swallow now, was filled with anxiety. If anything happened to mar the dignity of this cortège, or the Biggest Chief lose his stately appearance, then the only act left for the Swallow was to destroy himself.

Behind the Swallow were his armorer and cook, then the Farmer with his and then the Albino with his. After them were the bearers of the covered litters or palanquins. Each litter was less than three feet wide. It was made of skin stretched on hickory saplings.

These saplings or poles were long enough for the

two warriors who were bearers at the front of the litter to stand one behind the other between the shafts. Two other warriors in the same way went tandem between the shafts at the opposite end of the litter. Back of the first litter and in front of the second litter which was also borne by four men, stalked the wolf who could change itself into a man.

Behind the litters, in single file and in martial array, dressed in the finest of clothes and keeping perfect step, came the warriors of Newark. Their armorers and cooks, also in file and in the same step, were in the rear of the procession. The space of one man divided this line of lieutenants from the line of warriors in front of them.

Those who had good singing voices were placed at regular intervals in both lines so that the chant would rise in correct rhythm to time the marching feet. Sometimes they changed the tune and the words but never the cadence.

Each morning of that march, all these men breakfasted on hot corn porridge and soon fell into step, a step which never varied for twelve consecutive hours.

At the end of every few minutes of pallbearing, the warriors between the shafts were relieved one at a time, in intervals of about two minutes. Thus:

At the double thump-thump of the drums, the foremost warrior in the line of march behind the

litters, stepped out on his right-hand side at double quick and, going forward, slipped under the shafts behind the first bearer of the eight and caught hold of the shafts. Instantly that first bearer slipped out of the shafts on the left-hand side. He stood at attention on the edge of the trail until both litters had passed him.

Then he relaxed and rested in any way he pleased until the whole procession of nearly one thousand warriors had passed. He took the place as last warrior in the line.

In the meantime, at the second double thump-thump of the drums, the warrior who was now first man in the line of march behind the litters stepped out on his left-hand side at double-quick and, going forward, slipped under the shafts on the left-hand side behind the second bearer of the eight and caught hold of the shafts. Instantly that second bearer slipped out under the shafts on the right-hand side.

He stood at attention on the edge of the trail until both litters had passed him. Then he also relaxed and rested until the whole procession of warriors had passed. He then took the place as last warrior in the line.

This system of constant change alternating from right to left had the grace and precision of army maneuvers. This careful order made it possible for

each bearer to carry weight for a few minutes and for one bearer to be relieved every two minutes. From the place any one bearer took at the end of the line, he gradually came forward in position one place every two minutes and so arrived at the high honor of a pallbearer.

The whole procession moved forward constantly without a break in its harmony and without a stop for something like the whole twelve hours. It was surprising to notice how little the irregularities of the trail caused them to retard the time.

Each man briskly lifted his foot clear of the ground. He set it down again neatly and flat. There was no kicking of the thin snow nor rustling of the dried leaves. This normal, regular step, this rapid gait, is the pace of the so-called runner. Any savage runner has a dramatic take-off to please the eye of the onlooker and he comes into the spot of his journey's end with a rush to impress the populace. But on the trail his long distance good time is made in this steady regular going which can cover one mile an hour and twelve miles a day for trained warriors on the march.

The music marked the time and kept the warriors up to schedule. It inspired their hearts and enlivened their feet.

And the Cave Dwellers? They had never been taught to march and never would be able to take any

regular steps. Some primitive people cannot learn to drill.

In broken file without formation of any kind, they straggled along far out on the sides of the mournful parade. Dressed only in their own long hair they were a curious sight. Going uphill they dropped to all fours. Descending, they slid on their haunches. Never had the Nomad spies, who followed and watched the cortège, seen any such folks as these Cave Dwellers.

But when a group of the Nomad spies surrounded a Cave Dweller, who had dropped out of sight behind the others, and tried to capture him, he had knocked one in the head with his handstone and used the body to mow down the others before he loped away.

"When we come into the neighborhood of Seven Caves, they will probably desert," worried the Albino. "We will command them to go home before they reach that point," comforted the Swallow.

At the end of each day's run, the Swallow selected high ground with a wide outlook. There the litters were placed with the feet to the east ready to greet the rising sun. The evening service over them was the peaceful ritual, always sad, of the moon cult. But the morning rites to face the ever blessed miracle of returning day were full of hope.

Supper fires were lighted each night in a big circle

around this high ground. Guards slept with their feet to the fires and their heads toward the center of the circle.

The Swallow and the Farmer and the Albino were the only ones who never carried weight. They with the whelp divided the nine hours of the night watch among them.

Day after day the cortège moved on.

They had no accidents. Without any more snow and with no worse weather than the increasing cold, they came at last to the Hopewell mounds outside of Chillicothe and to the Builder of those mounds.

The Builder had a grave face strikingly tattooed in the old-fashioned manner. He wore a chaplet of pearls around his headdress. In his time he had engineered many forts and town walls, innumerable playgrounds and stadiums, covered ways and parallel gauntlet runs, pyramids, conical and effigy mounds.

Now as he grew older he was in the mood to erect mausoleums. He wanted to construct something that would be impressive and everlasting. When the Hopewell people had decided upon this spot for a memorial in the days when he was much younger, he had helped them select a piece of ground and clear off the verdure and sod and top soil down to hardpan. The hardpan was covered with puddled clay and that with gravel and fine sand to make a

THE BUILDER MOVED A THOUSAND TONS OF ROCK.

solid floor. The floor was surrounded with a high picket fence of saplings set in the ground and fastened together with branches woven through. The roof was thatched.

In such little sacred houses it was the custom to cremate the departed. Then the house itself was burned and a mound placed above it. But this did not satisfy the Builder. He felt that the great ones of the earth should be more imposing in their departure from it.

He wished all chieftains and rulers might preserve their identity after death; so he had planned what he imagined would be an enduring tomb. He had already begun the great central mound of the Hopewell group. And in it had been buried the father of the Biggest Chief.

And now as he saw the Swallow bringing the cortège of the Biggest Chief himself, he was thankful that his edifice could save for centuries, perhaps to the end of time, much of the possessions and the grandeur of the Middle West's most powerful ruler.

The elders and the counselors and the Priest in the fort had instructed the Swallow in the matter of arranging the three thousand witnesses of the funeral in groups, of conducting the chanting of the final solemn rites, and he obeyed their commands.

The Swallow was master of ceremonies.

The litters were uncovered. All gazed for the

last time upon this handsome couple, the ideal rulers of the Mound-builders.

Their wedding garments of finest woven bast were embroidered with thousands and thousands of precious pearls. Among the pearls to emphasize the designs were burnished copper-covered buttons. Copper, the most precious metal that these people of the Stone Age knew, was made into disks like flat spools to form their earrings. The braids of their hair were wound around copper rods which crossed their breasts.

The Biggest Chief's copper ax, that symbol of his authority as ruler of the nation and which was so heavy, was laid at his wife's feet as if to protect her.

On his head his copper helmet gleamed. About the necks of both were strings of rare canine teeth of the bear. The Builder said, "I am thankful such beauty does not need to be burned. I have perfected a plan by which these two may keep all their grace as they vanish from our sight."

He gave to the Swallow two devices of copper in the shape of the human nose. And the Swallow, with tender hands, laid upon each beloved face a copper nose. All knew that the nose is delicately built and sometimes gives way. When they saw that the copper noses were supplied to preserve the profiles of this man and wife that they might go into

the next world with dignified faces as well as splendid clothes, they murmured in gratitude. They had an appreciation of the inventive genius of the Builder.

The Builder showed the concourse how he had constructed parts of the beginnings of a large mound. Against an earthen wall as against a cliff he had prepared the clay floor. Around the clay he was prepared to build a strong log house. The back wall was now ready. The sides were begun by placing the far ends of the side logs between the ends of the back logs. Close at hand was stacked the material to complete it.

So the litters were reverently placed upon the floor. The waiting priests, in their musical young voices, told of the world to come and prayed for the warriors and their lieutenants.

The Swallow, throwing back his fur to show again his wide bracelet of command, formally pledged himself and the people there in the presence of the Biggest Chief, to strive without ceasing to preserve the nation. United in their bereavement, each must help the others. The menace of their foes was all about them. Like brothers they stood and watched the logs laid in place to form the Biggest Chief's house of dreamless sleep. They saw the canopy shrouded over it.

Guards would be stationed by it day and night.

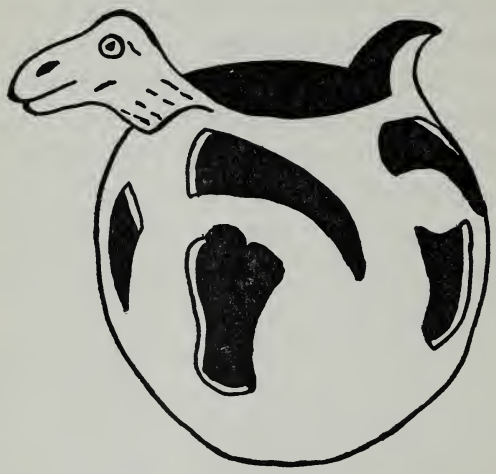
Earth to cover it had been provided. With the first thaw the Builder of the Great Central Mound of the Hopewell Mound Group would go on with his work to perfect it.

Human hearts are all alike. The instincts of the soul are the same in every man. The need for prayer is universal. Each person longs for immortality. Standing before the sepulcher, the Mound-builders were comforted by the ministers of their religion who used much the same words then, when the mausoleum was building, as they would use could they see it to-day, so little changed through the thirty centuries since their time.

"Remember thy Creator—do good—act bravely —and thou shalt find eternal life—"

Some one with a ceremonial stone shattered a pottery vase, as a symbol, to remind the warriors that all clay must return to the dust from which it came. The Builder, using a higher symbol, lifted up a vase of an exclusive design along whose sides the pattern was wrought in thinner clay. With his stone hammer he struck the pattern and the thinner clay was broken out, but the vase itself kept its contour as a vessel intact. And every one watching said to himself as he had been taught to say, "Thus will most of the clay of which I am made disappear, but the individual shape that is my soul can be preserved forever."

The west wind was rising. The bare limbs of the trees were like the strings of a gigantic harp as the breeze swept across them. It played a swelling dirge, solemn and melodious. To its strains the escort of honor, its duty over, moved on toward Chillicothe.



FUNERAL VASES HAD BROKEN PATTERNS ON THEM.

The Builder stood looking at the Great Central Mound. In its construction he had carried out his dream of a burial, not a burning, for the noble rulers of his time. He saw it as it would be when it was completed, a permanent home of living green for those who must go back to Mother Earth.

It was finally to house one hundred and fifty chiefs, in full panoply with untold wealth of gifts laid down beside them. Upon its altars are pearls and copper, mica ornaments in trefoil and quarter-foil designs, engraved and polished shells, fine flints, carved stone portraits, sculpture and pictured pottery and drawings on bone and volcanic glass.

It would take, altogether, a hundred men perhaps five hundred days to build it thirty-three feet high, five hundred feet long, one hundred and eighty feet wide. Carefully engineered not to wash, it would remain inviolate for three thousand years. The satisfaction of work well planned and successfully carried out brought solace and peace to the Builder.

XIV

SWALLOW

THE whelp's winter coat was shaggy. Every hair stood out separately, bristling to fight the cold.

The Swallow and the Farmer faced the west wind with their heads covered. Their rabbit-skin smocks were tied down and their legs wound round with more rabbit skin. This cuddling of themselves in fur was a secret thing, for runners were expected to take any weather as it came and not to shrink from icy blasts.

At the Hopewell mound, the Swallow had given the command of the Newark men over to their own head warrior. They had directions to go on into Chillicothe for a night's rest under shelter and two hot meals of meat, beans and raw nuts.

The Albino went with them to act as guide on the return trip to Fort Ancient. By following him through little known side tracks, the warriors might avoid battle with the lurking Nomads who would be doubly glad to attack them when the priests could no longer wear the trophy skulls of a funeral march.

But the Swallow himself had decided that he must go back to Fort Ancient in all haste. That citadel was his responsibility and care furrowed his brow. He had asked the Farmer to go with him.

The Builder noticing this had taken them aside to advise, "Wisdom is better than pride, my sons. When you are out of sight open the bundles which I am giving each of you and put on all the extra furs you find in them. You won't dare to light fires and you will have to sleep in the open. So you must keep your chests and ankles firmly bound."

He looked at the fuzzy whelp with a smile. "The best blanket is made of living hair," and he scratched the whelp's head back of and between its ears. "I have seldom seen a man I like as well as I do this whelp. If you manage to win through the cold back to the fort, give the wolf part of the credit."

After being warmed in the shelter used by the laborers on the mound, the Swallow and the Farmer were now having their food pouches filled with roasted acorns and dried venison. A sense of duty that was like wings on their moccasins sent them off immediately at a flying pace.

The hardships and the narrow escapes of that winter run will never be told. For the Swallow and the Farmer both knew that the good or the bad fortunes of any two men were as nothing compared

with the fate of the nation. They did not talk about themselves.

When they had at last won to the top of Fort Ancient's walls with their furs as full of Nomad darts as a porcupine is full of quills, the Swallow found that his bracelet still gave him command of the forces there.

It was not a happy office. The elders and counselors decided each day what was best to be done and the Swallow did it.

Already the Schoolmaster had lashed the slaves to the grim task of throwing the bodies of the Nomads into the twenty-foot ravine which was east of the Great Gateway where they had been slain, and north of the northeastern curved wall of the Old Fort. Using poles and axes they had rolled stones down for covering.

They had no wagons as a unit of measure so they did not know that they were putting in four hundred wagon loads, but they did understand that they must keep on flinging rocks of all sizes over that frozen hillside until the Schoolmaster called "Enough!"

South of the eastern part of the Old Fort, they had pitched many more Nomads and used something like forty loads of stone.

But in the cemetery belonging to the ten acre village site within the walls of the Old Fort they gave

orderly burial to their own warriors under carefully placed stones.

Most of the floor of both forts was the hardpan of limestone which was left uncovered after the top loose soil had been scratched up to build the walls. Only a thin layer of sand and gravel was left in some particular places. This made it hard to hide that horrid spot by the Great Gateway. So they covered with stone the débris that could not be removed. A raised platform four feet high still forms a handsome approach to the Gateway. After soil and grass had ornamented it no one would remember what was under it.

On the west side of the southeastern section of the Old Fort was the crematory. The miserable quartet were the stretcher carriers. The Schoolmaster had braided a whip of copper wire and hemp thread and the truants' calves were marked with welts where he had emphasized his commands for them to move along.

The Swallow had not dreamed that war would be like this. He had imagined that national defense was a few lively battles crowned by glorious victory. He had hoped through bravery at the Great Gateway and the successful conduct of the Biggest Chief's cortège to earn himself a suit of copper armor and perhaps the title of chieftain.

No armor was offered him and no clothes. He

girded himself in a torn fur pelt. A second pair of moccasins was drawn over his worn-out ones which had let his toes rub the ground. The second pair were worse than the first but the holes in both pairs did not come in the same places so they could be made to do for his work. All the good clothing left in the fort must be used to protect those brave fellows, who, though wounded and sick, still took their exposed stations on the towers to watch the gates.

There was always a savage hammering in this place and then in that. Driven from one barricade the scouting parties of Nomads would begin at another.

Instead of being a conqueror, the Swallow as commander of the fort was in hourly danger of being the conquered. He was almost within reach of the savages who wanted to capture and perhaps to eat him.

On four mounds set at corners of a square in the New Fort the Priest's cauldrons were boiling for all to see. The attendant priests constantly reminded the warriors who passed that this was the water to drink. Other mounds in the Middle and in the Old Fort had their big pottery vessels tended with the same care. The artesian wells, springing from their deep sources under limestone and gravel and bubbling through the ice, were used by many.

The low-lying springs of surface water were forbidden. Two cisterns, one in the Old Fort and one in the New, both on the extreme western borders and fed by water from the moat were abandoned. The Swallow set guards there. For that one night's orgy of the victorious Nomads had fouled the moat with the slain. Duck had flown and fishes floated wrong side up. It had been cleaned at once and salt water freely used.

But the Priest shook his head when the Swallow arrived, "They think, these poor slaves, that if we don't *see* them drink the forbidden water no harm is done. Their skulls are thick." He took the Swallow into his confidence just as all the other leaders did. "My old bones tell me a thaw is coming. A thaw will make this fort a hospital. It is so in all sieges. When the ice melts on the poisoned ground bad plagues will follow bad water."

The Medicine Man had caused the disposal of the Nomads and the rolling of the stones to become so noisy and so grewsome that the Nomad spies running back and forth to the Giant's camp from their hiding places around the fort had such tales to tell that no general attack was made on the Mound-builders in that first week when the Newark warriors were gone on the march to Hopewell.

In the following week when the Nomads advanced one day, with some notion of another big

attack at dusk, the Medicine Man, ready for them in his own way, had ordered double handfuls of salt, one after another, thrown on the red-hot coals of the signal mounds. The chlorine of the salt flashed up in a green, unearthly light over the faces of the enemy. The Nomads paused. They stared at one another. Each saw his neighbor turn sickly sallow in that weird glare. More spirits might be coming to walk on the fort wall! The Nomads retreated.

Four days after the Swallow and the Farmer arrived, the Newark men, delayed by the thaw, had appeared on the terrace, led by the Albino. They could get no farther than the southwestern corner of the Old Fort. For the Nomads had spied them and a strong force pursued and attached them on the terrace under the walls of the fort. Warriors, armorers and cooks were hard pressed.

The Swallow saw the Albino's signal of distress and loosed the Cave Dwellers first of all through the nearest gate. Other fighting men poured out to the rescue. But there was no need for more help. Each Cave Dweller with his hammerstone had struck a Nomad with what his language may have called an "upper-cut" and had broken that one's jaw and crushed his skull. Such destruction was done by these crude weapons, that after the Newark men had come victorious into the fort from the lively

skirmish, it took four hundred wagonloads of stone to cover up the work of the Cave Dwellers on the terrace.

In spite of all these accidents, the fighting spirit in Nomads rose again. Those driven from Fort Ancient by the Myth were coming back more and more often to make a sally at the gates which were heavily barred to defy them. Here, there and everywhere, with maddening persistence, like the throb of a fevered wound, was the thump, thump, thump of the savages.

The Nomads regretted their headlong flight from the Myth. Each warrior band felt that the Giant should have stood his ground and have made some tribe, not their particular tribe, of course, but some other tribe, take issue with that ghost and lay it.

They were not so well satisfied after the loss of the stronghold they had fought so hard to gain. They were beginning to find fault with the Giant. Why had he watched for more green witch lights instead of having men ready to attack the Newark warriors? His stupidity had let three thousand fresh men into the fort. If he was as brave as he said he was, why did he not drive back these Cave Dwellers and the Cincinnati men and the Trader's mercenaries from the barracks at Portsmouth?

"Over the wall again!" they clamored. "Give us another victory. Show us the treasures of the Old

Fort. We want loot! The snow is getting slushy. Let us move now!"

The reinforcements from Newark, Portsmouth and Cincinnati made a bold appearance on the walls. They started sorties with vigor. They sallied out against every attacking party. The northern Nomads, feeling the languor of the too early January thaw, breaking through ice they had expected to hold them, slopping in sudden rivulets, could not get together as they should have done to make another general and overwhelming attack.

Never have men shown better teamwork than the Swallow and the Farmer with the Priest as physician, the Schoolmaster at the front of the warriors and the Medicine Man as a sort of cheer leader. The Medicine Man tried to hearten the Mound-builders. His optimism was without foundation. He was the only happy person in the fort. "We know our own troubles," he would say. "Perhaps our enemies have some, too. Wait and see."

Because he had done such wonders with the Great Serpent and the prairie fire, with the Myth and the salted lights, they listened to him and expected of him more than he could do. His laughing, his singing and his sorcerer's dance were the only gay notes in the somber fort.

The elders and counselors no longer sat about the fire and smoked their pipes. They walked around

and around the fort pondering, "What shall we do next?" In the one night of their stay, the Nomads had burned nearly all of the huts and storehouses in the New Fort. They had spoiled more than they had eaten of meat and fresh vegetables. Sparks had fallen on the bark and straw of many cellar pits. Those caches had been charred. Now the elders wagged their heads and trotted about nervously on their stiff old legs. The food shortage distressed them. Famine!

In the overcrowded and underfed garrison it was impossible to make sure that all traces of the great battle had been taken away! One of the ills after such a battle was famine fever. Spotted fever!

Every day for more than the two weeks their sharp black eyes examined every man they saw. But it was the Medicine Man who finally grasped the Swallow's hand and directed his glance to a slave whose head and hands were shaking with chill as he helped a staggering, fevered man around the angle of the wall.

"Walk slowly," murmured the Medicine Man, "we may be mistaken," but his eyes were shadowed with misery. For the first time the Swallow knew what it meant to be sick with dread. He felt as hollow as a gourd. When they came to the slave he was one of several cleverly hidden in an angle of the wall.

"To conceal their misery is an instinct with these creatures when they are hurt," was the Medicine Man's regret. "We might do better for them if we knew their troubles sooner. This one with the chill is in the first stage of the disease. The staggering one has a fever which will soon drive him to delirium. He has been sick three or four days."

The Swallow knelt and opened the smock of a third man who was tossing about unconscious. Where the skin had been covered, red blotches showed. "Spotted fever—famine fever!" He had been sick a week at least. As they both lifted a fourth, they found he could neither see nor hear. "He is slipping into coma," was the Medicine Man's belief, "but we may save him. For at least ten days they have protected him. There is kindness, though a mistaken kindness, even among Nomad slaves."

"We have hunted for this sickness every day," mourned the Swallow. "From now on, as long as any of us survive, every patient shall have care."

"Spotted fever. Famine fever!" Every hour more men were stricken. Chills with helpless jerkings, fever with madness, pain, red spots growing darker, days of prostration and then death marked case after case. The Nomads had jailed the Mound-builders in their own fort and they were having jail fever—famine fever—spotted fever—typhus—that scourge of siege and battle which has taken more

lives, probably, than weapons have ever done. Yet even this infectious, contagious evil had to slink and go away at the command of the Water Sprite.

To set the right example, the Swallow would not command any man to do what he had not first done himself. Unspeakable drudgery fell to his lot. He was the emergency dictator of the fort. The Farmer standing beside and a little back of the Swallow, as the Swallow had once stood near the Biggest Chief, had his own quick wit, his steady nerves and his band of Michigan men always at the Swallow's service. What the Swallow had been to the Biggest Chief in bitter trouble, the Farmer was now to the Swallow.

The whelp was counted as a warrior and did its duties without growling.

The Snow Moon waned. Black nights followed. A new moon slowly grew. It was the Wan Moon, the Hunger Moon of February.

The Thunder Bird dragged like a wet blanket across the high plateau of the fort and sailed away. Signal fires on the towers smoldered and blazed fitfully. Their messages were hard to read. Within the fort, pineknot torches moving back and forth, shone yellow as they passed the limestone background of the gateposts, glowed orange along the brown earthen walls and scarlet in the darkest corners.

The elders and counselors, not so many of them now, sat in front of the skin shelter which had taken the place of their snug loghouse burned by the Nomads. They again allowed themselves the comfort of a council pipe. Neither Nomads nor Mound-builders had any sort of intoxicating drink before white men came. Tobacco was their only stimulant.

The Swallow and the Farmer, the Schoolmaster, the Priest and the Medicine Man were near by, hoping to make out what news the fire and smoke signals were bringing in from far-away towers. Everywhere groups of warriors and huddles of slaves were trying to do the same thing.

Those sick men of every class whom the Priest's assistants had managed to keep alive for three weeks were past the dangerous period of their sickness and were now becoming conscious. Red spots had left them. With surprising rapidity they were growing better. They took up life again as they, too, counted the short blaze, the short, short blaze, the long blaze, the long, long blaze and the short, long blaze with smudges and rings.

"So far," said the Schoolmaster, translating the code, "none of our big cities has yielded to any passing attack of restless skirmishers. Every gate is still firm and every wall solid. That shows what law and order and discipline will do, if we keep to them, to preserve our civilization."

The Farmer's gaze followed the smoke signs which told, "All the little hamlets have been looted and burned," and he made comment: "But people had already left the hamlets and taken refuge in the big city forts. Such common sense and foresight will have much to do with our survival."

The Priest looked old to-night. The flickering lights deepened the furrows in his cheeks and the shadows under his eyes. "If we can hold fast to our faith in the Great Spirit so that the work of each hour is done with a pure motive, then and then only can we hope to raise our nation to a high spiritual plane and continue our development into something that will aid mankind."

Through the Swallow's brain flashed like a hundred tiny fire signals, a long list of the accomplishments of the Mound-builders. He did not want the artistic designs of their arts and crafts lost, nor the wealth of the foodstuffs they had discovered, nor the cleverness of their military defenses, nor the dignity of their industrious character to be forgotten.

His nation had begun a form of civilization unique and progressive and he was passionately determined to carry it on for the benefit of all peoples.

The Medicine Man's face was quizzical. "Daily I laugh at the pranks played upon us by those birds of evil that we call Luck and Chance. Think of the

irony of a fate which puts the whole future of the Middle West into the hands of us few men who have not, this minute, the least idea of what to do!"

At that the Swallow cried out, "I am resolved to hold this fort until our nation shall win through to victory. Fort Ancient must stand. By its strength we can go on nobly for centuries after this danger is past. With every hour of my future life I shall strive to make the Mound-builders a more powerful nation than they ever have been—both good and great!"

He was so illumined by the high flung signal fires and by the light of his own courage that they thought he was inspired as the Biggest Chief had been to see the future, when he exclaimed, "The Mound-builders will conquer the Nomads and be the pride and glory of this land for ages to come. What will happen—will happen!"

And the Albino? What of him? The gentle Albino had become a war dog. His scouting companion was the grimmest of all war dogs, the whelp of a wolf. With hands and face stained and covered with his cloak of invisibility, he was their most reliable spy. In the dark these two, the boy and the wolf, prowled about outside the fort.

But the Albino was homesick. He longed for his warm cave. All the Cave Dwellers were uneasy. This picturesque plateau was nothing but a cold

prison. The famous view from its Lookout Point was merely more chilly outdoors. They felt that what the fort needed was a good stone roof. They knew nothing and cared nothing about civilization. They couldn't see why the Swallow wanted to preserve it. Nothing was worth fighting for on clammy, thawing days.

"Do you suppose," the Swallow wondered, "those southern Nomads feel the cold as the Cave Dwellers do and want to go home?"

The Medicine Man snatched at the straw. "Do you go, my Albino, in the dark of to-night and see if the camps to the south of us are in the usual order."

"If I may take the whelp," agreed the Albino. The whelp was willing. It had a notion to forage for rabbits and the Albino might broil them. The Albino was a firemaker and the whelp had respect for cooks. So they went out secretly through that small "inaccessible" southeast gate, down the "unscalable" gully walls. They walked in the black night and were not afraid of evil birds or water panthers. Several days passed before they came back.

And ever and ever and ever and ever sounded the threats of the hammers and hammers and hammers and hammers at the gates.

But when the Albino did come in his eyes were

as round as pearls and the whelp was the picture of a satisfied diner. And this is what the odd pair had found out:

"When the Kentucky Nomads first came north to join the Giant, the Trader sent agents among them at Portsmouth to warn them of cold in the north. Southerners dread the cold. So for half of each Nomad's supply of arrows, the Trader's agents sold coats. Those are the arrows you paid for with my pearls when you bought the last Portsmouth mercenaries from the Trader, my Swallow!" The Medicine Man groaned, but the Albino went on, "When all the Nomads' half supply of arrows were shot away and the snow began to fall, an agent told them he would give them plenty of corn to feed them if they wanted to go back home out of the cold. All they would have to do to get the corn would be to leave the fur coats at Portsmouth treasure house after they crossed the Ohio River into their own warmer climate."

"Did they do that?" cried the Medicine Man.

"They had been hungry for a week. They took the offer. Now the Trader's treasure house is full of fur coats and the southern Nomads are all gone."

"Gone?" cried the Swallow. "Gone?" echoed the Medicine Man.

"Gone!" exclaimed every warrior crowding round.

"Gone," answered the Albino. He began to tremble so that the Schoolmaster put an arm around him and the whelp came up close. "Also, I have found out about northern Nomads." In his excitement his speech grew more and more archaic. It did not seem possible that he really was saying what his old-fashioned words meant. They could not be true. "The northern Nomads do not like our climate any more. Instead of the bright snow and the cold they were used to, there has been dull rain and damp days. Too many changes! When the snow did fall it soon melted. Slush dismayed them. They do not mind ice, but they hate slush."

He was panting for breath as he hurried on, "All the big game has been driven out and a Nomad has to work hard to get a few chipmunks for supper. Chipmunks do not please a bold hunter who wants strong bear meat. Nomads are going back to their own northern game drives as soon as the meadow freezes again so they can get foothold to conquer this fort. Some have gone already."

Every warrior stared at every other warrior. The smoke signals had not given them this news. The Albino was the first one to discover it. "Come to the southern gate," he begged.

The Albino was trying not to shudder. On that night of the crescent moon when the Nomad arrow had come straight at him as he walked the snowy

wall, he had not flinched. But whenever the whelp ran an inquiring nose along a red arrow scratch, newly healed, on the Albino's neck just below the ear, as it did now when they all paused at the stone gateway, the white one reproached it in his quaint speech, "Do not scold me for shivering, my whelp, when I think of that wall I walked in the moonlight. Remember that you, also, once lost a lock of hair in a good cause."

When the gate was opened in walked the Trader. His head was tied up in heavy cloth against the cold, just as it had been swathed in thin cloth during the July heat when the Swallow first saw him. The same grapevine cords had been tied in the same way on this winter headdress as on the summer one. He looked exactly like the portrait tomahawk pipe he held in his hand. A raccoon coat was girded round him so neatly that he had perfect freedom of action.

He looked at the elders and counselors with his cold appraising eyes. With a wave of his pipe, he announced, "Maple sap has begun to run. We need maple sugar cakes to conduct our spring commerce. We must cease fighting and go to work in the sugar bush." He frowned. "This war is no longer profitable to me. I have sold all my slaves and trained warriors and collected pearls enough to make a good per cent. We must get back to regular business again. We must stop the war."

Stop the war! For months they had thought of nothing else but of some action to drive back the Nomads. Waking and sleeping, the Swallow's mind worked on one subject only: How were they to end the war?

Hourly when they were separated and daily while they were together, the Swallow and the Medicine Man and the Farmer, racked their brains for plans to thwart the Nomads. A pitched battle in the meadow was out of the question. The Mound-builder fighting men were not numerous enough to cope with the Nomads, who were as numerous as grains of sand in Michigan, so the farmers declared.

This richest man, the Trader, because of the power his wealth gave, could tell them all what to do. The elders and counselors said, "Yes—yes," and "Yes—yes—yes!"

The Medicine Man, with his laughing eyes, enjoyed the situation. The Swallow was perplexed. Once before he had obeyed the Trader and had seen queer things happen almost immediately. So his face said, "Yes—yes—yes," and his elfin eyebrows went up.

The Trader studied the Swallow who was disheveled and ragged and bandaged in a dozen places. His compelling gaze searched the Swallow's mind. The Trader's orders had struck a spark in the Swal-

low's thoughts and the boy glowed all over, bracing himself against the shock of a fantastic notion.

Quick as a wink he answered the Trader, glance for glance. He knew now that he, himself, could stop the war. He knew how he could do it and when. All the plans he had been trying to make and hoping against hope to carry through suddenly crystallized. He meant to do an extraordinary thing. Like a wind-flung torch he was all on fire.

The Trader watched him as though he had expected this very response to his command. In his heart the Trader knew that pearls could not buy gallant youth. Youth must give itself as the Swallow was doing, without thought of profit.

The Medicine Man began to twinkle. He had no idea of what the Swallow was going to do but he sensed a climax and he meant to have a part in it. His hair stood out like the whelp's crest. His very bandages took on the quality of flaunting banners. He laughed aloud. He was more than alive. He scintillated.

The Trader scowled. "Look you, of Cincinnati," he said, "the Swallow is now by my order in official command of Fort Ancient. If he frees the fort you must give him the highest office in the nation. If he can win that office by his own individual action, then all the treasures of my pearl chests will go to reëstablish the Hopewell Mound-building people on

a business basis. We will then be safe for many, many more generations. And I can accumulate more pearls with interest."

The elders and counselors said, "Yes—yes," and "Yes—yes—yes." Half their troubles were over. The Trader could afford to pay for what he ordered done. The Swallow and the Medicine Man looked at one another as they had done so many times before. They called the Farmer and the three put their heads together. The Schoolmaster, anxious to help, cracked his whip for his quartet of slaves and set them to the heavy tasks that must be done to please the Trader. Poor scullions!

"I will conjure you some fine clothes out of the empty air—or—or—elsewhere," and the Medicine Man grinned at the shabby Swallow. "Regalia is a magician's best source of dramatic effect. You must look the part we are arranging for you."

Like one full of joy, the Swallow mounted the shoulders of the Farmer and the Schoolmaster, crying aloud to the whole fort. By dozens and dozens the Mound-builders came running and limping and hobbling with crutches. Some were carried along and some were dancing on one leg. Never did a leader have such a motley following. More than half naked, emaciated, with old battle scars healing, with fresh wounds hastily tied, dragging their spear handles in a racket over the flat stone pavements

and the cobbled ways, they came through the Isthmus, opening and clanging the three sets of gates from the New Fort to the Isthmus, from the Isthmus to the Middle Fort and from the Middle Fort to the Old Fort, to answer his cry.

The Swallow's voice was triumphant. Perhaps he was destined to deliver them. He said he was. They trusted him. Hark to his words:

"I will challenge the Giant to a duel. All men must observe the law of trial by combat. I myself will fight the eight-foot Giant at the end of the stadium on the platform mound. Two armies, Nomad and Mound-builder, shall act as judges. The winner is to hold the fort. The losing side is to leave the Middle West. What will happen, will happen."

Immediately this challenge was given for the very next day. It was accepted by the Nomads. The winter had been a disappointment to both armies. Nothing had happened in the way they had expected it to do. There was something that appealed to Nomad and Mound-builder alike in this second duel. It was like a throw of one of their pottery gambling disks. They took a chance and gained all or lost all in one contest. They needed the recreation of just such a game, they thought.

Once more the savage hordes, diminished by desertions and tired of the whole campaign and not

such braggarts now, came into the meadow. The sun was bright enough but the slush was muddy. It slopped around their ankles and gave them gooseflesh. But they drew up near enough to see the duel. The fort walls were covered with Mound-builders who wanted to watch again the barbarous spectacle of two men in mortal combat. Hidden among them were the Albino and the whelp and the Medicine Man.

Out came the Swallow shining in copper armor. His head was uncovered and the swallow wing tips tilted proudly.

All the good clothes in the fort had been given to the Farmer's men. They marched along the stadium first, making a fine appearance, in perfect order and form which the Nomads viewed amazed. Nomads could dance but they could not teach themselves to drill. Forming three sides of a hollow square opening to the northeast toward the Nomad audience, the farmers knelt, each on one knee and poised his spear to guard the mound.

Then came the Schoolmaster's pride, his team, making a virtue of being quite without clothes. They stood behind the farmers and held their bows strung and their arrows set to throw a barrage if necessary. The Nomads had never seen anything like this. They goggled. The Newark men, the Cincinnati men and the mercenaries from the Portsmouth trap

were so changed by their Mound-builder trainers that the other Nomads did not recognize them. Strangely enough they did not care to be remembered. Their feet were dry and even the half rations of the beleaguered fort's food shortage was more in their stomachs than they had ever had before. For the moment they would rather be Mound-builders than Nomads.

The swaggering Giant as he crossed the meadow was cased in leather. He was an older man than the Swallow and heavier. He wore his horns so that he looked two feet taller. If he had been a successful leader every Nomad would have shouted for him.

But he had been too slow in capturing Fort Ancient. When he did take it a mere ghost had scared him out. The Dark Moon and the Snow Moon had passed and now the Hunger Moon was long beyond the full and they were still camping in the wet woods. His Nomads wanted to see him fight somebody of his own size, not because they felt merciful to the Swallow but for the suspicion they had that he might be a coward. He made many big speeches but they would like to see a few deeds.

The Swallow called aloud to the Giant so both armies could hear, "We will trade knives." The Mound-builders yelled, "Yes—yes!" The Nomads thinking of the Biggest Chief at first said nothing.

If the poisoned knife in the Biggest Chief's shoulder had won them the fort to hold they would have thought it a clever ruse and have praised the Giant. But since it had gained them nothing they had thought it a great mistake for him to have stooped to treachery. Even savages have what they think is a code of honor.

So some of the Nomads called, "No—no!" and some, alas, "Yes—yes!" Here was a division in the Giant's tribes. He dared not force an issue with his own men. He handed his knife toward the Swallow. The Swallow pulled a piece of cloth from his armor and carefully wrapped it about his hand. All necks were craned. Both armies murmured, "We know why he did that." Then he took the knife. He posed for dramatic effect upon his audience and threw the knife away. More and louder murmuring followed this. "He does not trust the Giant's sportsmanship." Men in both armies started to argue with those who were nearest them. Howls and whoops arose.

The Nomads' voices changed to a high minor key, not so loud but more penetrating, a "Yip—yip—yip—yip!" They were getting excited and might easily work themselves into some sort of a bad mood. They were such an undisciplined mob that there was no telling what they might do next. Under their rough criticism the Giant was undecided as to how

he should act. The Swallow offered his own knife to the Giant.

It was not a fighter's knife. It was a boy's short handy flint knife. It looked like a mere toy.

This was absurd, ridiculous. Some place a man began to laugh, a full-throated, merry, "Ha—ha—ha," and "Ha—ha—ha—ha!" This rib-tickling sound carried over stadium and meadow and woke guffawing echoes everywhere. 'Twas so contagious that soon both of the armies were holding their sides and laughing aloud at the funny little knife for a combat.

The Giant took the boy's knife and threw it away. What else could he do? "Ha—ha—ha." This was going to be another good show. "Ha—ha—ha." The spectators were having a grand time. A big fight without weapons would be a treat.

The Swallow said in a low tone to the Giant, and his voice had a strange menace, "Not by a knife will you die, but by a wolf—a wolf—a wolf. As your brother died so will you, by a wolf—a wolf—a wolf!" He had flipped his hand in a peculiar gesture and with his words came that dreadful, long-drawn hunting cry of a hungry wolf.

The Giant's eyes bulged with horror. At the same instant the Swallow leaped. On the action of these few seconds he had staked his own life and the life of his nation. Never was more desperate

energy in any man's hands. The Swallow's fingers, thin, strong and sharp-nailed, closed on the Giant's throat. They felt like fangs. The Giant thought they were wolf fangs. Overcome by this shock on top of his confusion, he went down in a heap.

Clear-brained, hard-hearted and self-controlled, the Swallow pulled him upright and struck him again and again. Getting bolder and quicker and rougher with each successful blow, the boy fought and fought the bigger man. Physically the Swallow was not a match for the Giant, but in spirit and wit he was superior. When the Swallow thought, "I am equal to my trust," his strength was as the strength of ten.

The Nomads and the Mound-builders were enjoying what they thought was an entertaining combat. But the Giant never got his courage back. His vanity collapsed. Whatever skill he may have had as a hand-to-hand fighter deserted him when he thought he heard the call of the wolves who had slain his brother and felt their fangs in his throat. He really thought he was dying when he was only scared. He finally went down and lay flat under the foot of the Swallow.

When the Giant was prone the Nomads began to shout, some in disgust, some in glee and some just to make a noise.

Then they saw the Priest, in sumptuous garb, fol-

lowed by his retinue of bedecked young votaries, carrying staffs with butterfly banner stones on their tops from which gay pennants fluttered. Here was another show. Both armies waited.

The Priest's face was masked and he carried aloft his sacrificial ax. This flint ax had a long and terrible history. Its shape told victims what their fate must be. Every one expected to see him decapitate that vanquished Giant. Perhaps the Priest did intend to execute justice with his own hands. Many hoped he would.

The Farmer and the Medicine Man and the Schoolmaster had been standing with their hearts in their throats. When the Swallow tossed his wing tips proudly and threw back his head in triumph, his best friends knew that their children and their children's children's children were safe and they were too thankful to speak. So they fell to petting the Albino and the whelp and took them into the stadium.

But the whelp, who had a new accomplishment and wanted to be praised for it, now ran to retrieve the Swallow's knife from the spot where it had watched the Giant throw the familiar plaything.

The whelp stood on its hind legs, a dominant startling figure with the little stone knife in his teeth, offering this find to the Priest.

It was such a surprise that a silence fell on all

sides. But the Priest knew what to do. By decisions made quickly he had managed to survive to old age. He laid down his ax, took the boy's knife from the whelp, "*Good* doggie—good *doggie!*" and intoning his most sonorous chant, reached over and cut—not the Giant's throat—but his hair.

Those two braids like horns were sawed off. With contemptuous fingers, as he would have tossed two bones, the Priest flung them to the whelp, who trotted off to bury them for future use. The shrinking Nomads feared that when next the wolf turned itself into a man it would be a black spirit with horns and a water panther's tail.

The Swallow spurned the Giant with his foot and let him go. Vanquished he had no friends on either side. He was neither Nomad nor Mound-builder. His chieftainship was gone, never to be regained.

The gates of the citadel were thrown wide open. All the warriors rushed out toward the Swallow. They were shouting and weeping, waving their weapons and dancing, quite beside themselves. The thick-skulled, slow-thinking Nomads were alarmed. It might be a sally against them. They had no leader and no appetite for battle. There were too many ghosts and devils and evil birds inside that big enclosure. So they ran and they ran. Once they had begun to run they could not stop. The rout

was as contagious as the laughter had been. One tribe followed another, this way, that way.

As they once had started toward Ohio in a swirling mob, they now left it in utter defeat and complete ruin. They scattered east, north and west, fleeing on and on, not to come back again for half a thousand years.

THREE MOUNDS WERE BUILT TO HONOR THE SWALLOW.

The Mound-builders were victorious.

Their fort was saved, their cities delivered and their cherished semi-civilization insured for ages to come.

The Farmer's men and the Schoolmaster's, very happy, almost as gay as the Medicine Man, had received their instructions from the elders and counselors. They had been told what to do and they were all ready to do it in the highest spirits.

Those powerful elders and counselors were judges over all the chieftains. But they in their turn were managed for their own good and for the nation's welfare by the Supreme Medicine Man, he of Cincinnati, who so skillfully and artfully led them that they never knew he was doing it.

In a quiet corner of the fort was held a secret interview between those two best friends and oldest enemies, the Trader and the Medicine Man. The Medicine Man frankly confessed that he could no longer act like a young man as he had been doing through the winter.

"I have served my time as a warrior," with a grimace he rubbed his aching back while standing on one foot to rest the other. "I've had all I want of the adventures of pitched battle, of starvation, of typhus and of flint stabs. I'm going back to my old business of politics. Such service is the best for me."

The Trader drew down his nose and the corners of his mouth. "You have never left that service," he scowled. "You know as well as I do that I have counted on you from the first to keep beside our boy, just as you have done. You have guided the Swallow's flying feet, formed his character and matured his judgment. Go with him to Chillicothe and stay there. Be the good advisor ever at his side. You are as wise as I am rich. Between us we

will help him to make himself worthy of a great name."

The laughing Medicine Man nodded. His hands were as warm and as comforting as a homely hearth fire as he laid them on the cold shoulders of the lean and anxious Trader in an intimate embrace.

"As a warning I have kept ever before his eyes that quartet of wretched slaves, the traitors with whom he once associated. Their tale-bearing precipitated the war," he declared and the Trader agreed. "If it were not for the Farmer, the Schoolmaster and the Albino, who have since been his companions, we might have lost the fort. Now the Swallow has the confidence of his people."

The Trader added with bursting pride, "In hand-to-hand conflict with the biggest Giant ever known he has proved himself the greatest warrior of the Middle West. His youth and strength, his happy smile and the quick action of his flying feet are what we experienced older men need to represent us in the great stone seat on the highest mound in our Capital at Chillicothe."

"He is the young warrior who can hold the Mound-builders' hearts," they murmured in unison, "all are calling for him—how their voices ring!"

Fan the signal fires! Send the wireless message!

The Fort Ancient people and soon the Chillicothe folks and then the whole Hopewell nation would

know of the final victory and its glorious celebration in the delivered citadel.

The Swallow and the whelp were surrounded and the shouts of every man rose in a great resounding chorus.

"All honor to the Swallow! Our strongest and bravest!"

"We acclaim him—we acclaim him! The Biggest Chief!"

"He is our Biggest Chief—our Biggest Chief is the Swallow—the Swallow—the Swallow!"

THE END

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

PEOPLE in prehistoric days liked to see birds flying, animals playing and themselves dancing gayly, so they made many pictures of such things. Their drawings and carvings are found under very old earthworks or deeply buried in ancient mounds.

Often a flood will wash out bits of broken shell which can be pieced together to form curious carved faces.

Boys digging for bait along a creek bank find stone pipe bowls that are cut in the shapes of beasts and reptiles. Some of these look almost as good as new, others are nearly worn out—old as the little hills the Mound people built over them.

Of the pictures shown in this book, the Swallow, the Biggest Chief, the Medicine Man, the Warriors and the Thunder Bird were drawn on copper hundreds and hundreds of years ago. The Sorcerer was scratched on bone. The Builder and the Priest are shell carvings. The Water Sprite, the portrait jar and the bird bowl are made of clay. The Myth and the serpent are designs on pottery.

The duck taking a ride on a fish is a pipestone

carving and so is the mammoth. The turtle is made of big stones laid on the ground.

All these pictures and the little round ones, too, are taken from relics belonging to the Smithsonian Institution's Bureau of Ethnology and are adapted and used by permission.

The Giant's figure, the wild geese and the flight of swallows are outlines of big effigy mounds in Wisconsin and were furnished by Mr. Charles E. Brown, Secretary of that state's Archeological Society. The bodies of the Trader and of the Farmer are terra cotta pieces mended by Dr. C. C. Willoughby of the Peabody Museum, Harvard University.

The Schoolmaster is a carved stone pipe bowl and so is the whelp, the owl and the cat. The petroglyph is chipped on stone but the bear is cut from mica.

The map of Fort Ancient follows the outlines of a small relief model; like the mica animal and the stone pipe bowls it was taken from the article itself in the Ohio State Museum by the courtesy of the Director.

Because they left such good pictures of themselves, the writer of this story is very grateful to the Mound-builders, and is also deeply indebted for many interesting facts taken from the following modern books:

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The Mound-Builders, by Henry Clyde Shetrone (D. Appleton and Company, 1930).

Prehistoric America, by Stephen Peet (Chicago Antiquarian Society, 1903).

Indiana Geological Reports, by Maurice Thompson and E. T. Cox (State of Indiana, 1884-5-6).

Discourse on the Aborigines of the Valley of the Ohio, by William Henry Harrison (1838).

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